

THE
ADVANCEMENT
AND
REFORMATION
OF
Modern POETRY.
A Critical Discourse.

In Two Parts.

The First, Shewing that the Principal Reason why the Ancients excel'd the Moderns in the greater Poetry, was because they mix'd Religion with Poetry.

The Second, Proving that by joyning Poetry with the Religion reveal'd to us in Sacred Writ, the Modern Poets might come to equal the Ancient.

Ab Jove principium Musæ. Virg.
Per Ambages Deorumq; Ministeria præcipitandus
est liber Spiritus. Petron.

By Mr DENNIS.

L O N D O N,
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To the Most Noble
J O H N,

Lord Marquess of *Normanby*,
Earl of *Mulgrave*, &c.

A N D

Knight of the Most Noble Order
of the Garter.

My Lord,

I Make no question, but that all those Gentlemen, who shall happen to be offended at the Newness and Boldness of the Positions, which are the subject of the following Treatise, will accuse me of want of Judgment, not only for advancing 'em, but for daring to bring 'em under the protection of so discerning a Judge as your Lordship.

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But I desire those Gentlemen to believe, that if I had had a mind that my faults should have lain conceal'd, or would have consulted my own more than the publick advantage, your Lordship is the person to whom of all mankind I would last have chosen to have address'd them. That tho you had never writ your admirable Essay, I should have been convinc'd by your other Poems, and particularly by your Temple of Death; a Temple that is consecrated at the same time to Death and to Immortality, of your perfect knowledge in Criticism, because I have experience enough to be satisfied, that there never was a great Poet in the world, who was not an accomplish'd Critick. Horace, who was one of the greatest of the Roman Poets, was in the first Rank of Judges, and Virgil has taken care to transmit to posterity one of the exactest pieces of Criticism that ever was writ in the world; tho indeed it is a Criticism by Examples only, of which Boslu vouchsaf'd to write the Rules above sixteen hundred years afterwards.

Thus, my Lord, I am sufficiently acquainted with your Character to approach you with awe; but at the same time I am convinc'd that they are mistaken, who believe that the most Discerning are the most Rigid

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Rigid Judges. I am satisfied that a Writer has a great deal of reason to be more apprehensive of half Criticks, who are govern'd by opinion, or guided by prejudice, or sway'd by partial affection; and who see faults but in some places, and at some particular times; for such Censors are inexorable to the least of our Errors. But your Lordship, whose unclouded Understanding sees all our faults, where-ever they are, and who knows how difficult, if not impossible, it is for us not to err, will make large allowances for the Imperfections of Humane Nature, or our particular frailties, if you discover in us the appearance of any good quality, which may bespeak your indulgence. Imperfect, partial, prejudic'd Criticks have Judgment enough to Discover Faults, but want Discernment to find out Beauties; or if at any time by chance they Discover them, they are perhaps too interested, or too envious, or too fearful to own them. But as Nature, that has given you so many extraordinary qualities, has conspir'd with Fortune, in setting your Lordship infinitely above so mean a Passion as Envy; so she has plac'd you as far above the Imperious sway of opinion, that madly tyrannizes over the multitude. Your Lordship never approves of our actions because
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they have met with success, but because they deserve to succeed. And here I humbly desire of your Lordship, that in behalf of all the Lovers of Poetry, I may return you thanks for the Protection and Patronage of a great man deceas'd. 'Tis known to all the observing world, that you generously began to espouse him, when he was more than half oppress'd by a very formidable party in the Court of King Charles II. a faction that wanted neither Power nor Authority to crush him; who, besides that they held the foremost Rank in the State, had got possession of the minds of the people, with whom they had acquir'd a great Reputation, for their Knowledge and Capacity in matters of Wit and Criticism. If that great man had faults, your Lordship wanted no Discernment to find them; but you wanted malice, partiality, prejudice, and the rest of those ungenerous obstacles, that hindred others from discovering or confessing his Beauties. Your Lordship easily found that he had Beauties which over-weigh'd all faults; and it was that consideration that engag'd you to support him against his powerful adversaries. They, upon an unaccountable spite which they had taken to his person, would have oppress'd his growing merit; your Lordship, in consideration of that merit, cherish'd his person, not
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withstanding his pretended frailties ; and while others, to express their malice to the man, would have hindred the advancement even of that Art which they pretended to esteem so much ; your Lordship, on the contrary, by a wise, a good natur'd, and a noble proceeding, cherish'd the man on purpose to make him instrumental in advancing the Art. And as it was after you took him into your protection, that he writ several of his most valuable pieces, 'tis to your Lordship that the world is in some measure indebted for the greater number of his excellencies.

And with the same greatness of mind, with which to advance a noble Art, you rais'd and supported a man oppress'd by very powerful adversaries ; so in order to the same design, you pull'd down the Tyranny of publick prejudice, and of a Triumphant opinion. For 'tis known to all the world, that your Lordship declar'd against the Obscenity which was shamefully crept into our English Poetry ; at a time when not only that way of writing, but the Verses which you particularly hinted at, were in the very height of their Reputation. But the success was answerable to the nobleness of your Lordships attempt ; those Verses have gradually declin'd ever since in their

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Reputation, and nothing of that nature will now be suffer'd by any but the Rabble. So that your Lordship has done a very signal kindness not only to a noble Art, but to Vertue itself, and have highly oblig'd all vertuous men, as well as lovers of Poetry.

My Lord, I have mentioned this the more willingly, because it fairly gives me an opportunity of confirming by your Lordships Authority, the assertion which is the foundation of the following Treatise; which is, that Religion gives a very great advantage for the exciting of Passion in Poetry. Your Lordship has inform'd us, that Obscenity and Poetry are things that are inconsistent. The assertion must be granted by all to be unquestionably true; for nothing can be possibly consistent with an Art, which runs counter to the very end and design of that Art. Now the end of Poetry is to Instruct and Reform, and Obscenity in writing corrupts the manners. But this on the other side is not to be doubted, that Verses may be produc'd from the ancient Poets, which are at once Obscene and Poetical; tho at the same time it must be confest, that they would have been more fine, if they had been more chaste. But if any one demands why Ribaldry should be entertaining in the Ancient Poetry, when

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it is so plainly insufferable in the Modern; to him I answer, that it can be nothing but the Religion of the Ancients which makes the difference; for theirs was very consistent with Obscenity, whereas ours entirely abhors it. A way of writing that was authoriz'd by their Religion, could never be said to be utterly inconsistent with instruction. Besides, Passion is the principal thing in Poetry, and tho Obscenity has something too gross and fulsom in it, to consist with the Delicacy of a tender Passion, yet by mingling with their Obscene Verses, their Cupid, their Venus, and the rest of their Amorous Divinities, they had the advantage of that other sort of Passion which we call Enthusiasm; whereas the Divinity of our Religion being utterly abhorrent of any thing which is impure, such Ribaldry inserted in our Poetry can never possibly either instruct or move.

The consideration of what your Lordship has done to advance Poetry, has oblig'd me to lay the following Treatise at your feet; a Present, I confess, that is altogether unworthy of you, but it is by much the most valuable that either I have, or ever have had to make; and your Lordship has accepted it with the same goodness that the Persian King did the Apple: He saw that
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it was all that his Subject could do to testify his acknowledgment; and for that very reason it was more agreeable to him, than the vain pompous Presents of those who believ'd they could add to his Treasure. I believ'd that the very Design to improve an Art, which your Lordship has actually so much advanc'd, would prevail upon your goodness to excuse a great many faults, which you may find in the following Treatise.

But upon mentioning the Design of the ensuing Discourse, I find my self sufficiently perplex'd. There are several things of the last importance that ought to be preliminary to the Discourse itself: And I find that I have strong temptations upon me of following Mr Dryden's Example, and of saying to your Lordship, what is usually directed to the Reader in general. But then I consider that I have neither Mr Dryden's great qualities, nor like him a Reputation long establish'd, nor, what ought chiefly to be consider'd, the Honour of having often approach'd your Lordship, to authorize such a Liberty. But yet on the other side, the things that I have to say are of important consequence to the good of the Cause which I have undertaken; and I find that I should be wanting to that noble Cause, if I should address my self to the Reader in general; and

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I should be thought by all discerning persons to proceed as absurdly, as would a Lawyer, who upon a solemn pleading, should apply himself to the Multitude, who have little knowledge of his affair, and no Authority to determine it; instead of speaking to his Awful Judge, who has a perfect knowledge of his Cause, and a Sovereign Authority to decide it.

The Design of all Poetical Criticism, must be, if it is just and good, to advance so useful and so noble an Art as Poetry. And the design of the following Treatise is no less than to set the Moderns upon an equal foot with even admir'd Antiquity. In order to the doing which, I humbly desire leave of your Lordship, that I may make an enquiry in what the preheminance of the Ancient Poets consists; and why I prefer one of the Grecian Tragedies, as for example, the Oedipus of Sophocles, to one of our celebrated English Tragedies; as for instance, the Julius Cæsar of Shakespear. Upon reflection I find that the reason is, because I am more delighted and more instructed by the former; and that for this very reason, because I am more mov'd by it: For I find by experience that I am no further pleas'd nor instructed by any Tragedy, than as it excites Passion in me. But in
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order to the discovering why I am more mov'd by the former than the latter of those Tragedies, I desire leave to make an enquiry into the principal differences between them, and that in all probability will determine the matter. I find then, my Lord, that there are two very signal differences between the Oedipus and the Julius Cæsar. First, the Oedipus is exactly Just and Regular, and the Julius Cæsar is very Extravagant and Irregular. Secondly, the Oedipus is very Religious, and the Julius Cæsar is Irreligious. For, with submission to your Lordships Judgment, I conceive that every Tragedy ought to be a very solemn Lecture, inculcating a particular Providence, and showing it plainly protecting the good, and chastizing the bad, or at least the violent; and that if it is otherwise, it is either an empty amusement, or a scandalous and pernicious Libel upon the government of the world. The killing of Julius Cæsar in Shakespear, is either a Murder or a Lawful Action; if the killing Cæsar is a Lawful Action, then the killing of Brutus and Cassius is downright Murder; and the Poet has been guilty of polluting the Scene with the blood of the very best and last of the Romans. But if the killing of Cæsar is Murder, and Brutus and Cassius

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more we very justly punish'd for it ; then Shake-
those spear is on the other side answerable for in-
iniqui- troducing so many Noble Romans, com-
ween- mitting in the open face of an Audience, a
l de- very horrible Murder, and only punishing
Lord, two of them ; which proceeding gives an
ences occasion to the people to draw a dangerous
cesar. inference from it, which may be Destructive
l Re- to Government, and to Human Society.

extra- Thus, My Lord, I have a great deal of rea-
Dedi- son to suspect that the Oedipus derives its
Cæ- advantage from its Regularity, and its Re-
on to- ligion ; and the presumption grows still more
that strong, when upon enquiry I find, that the
lemn fore-mention'd Regularity is nothing but
rovi- the bringing some Rules into practice,
g the which Observation and Philosophy have
least found requisite for the surer exciting of Pas-
it is sion. For as this, I think, cannot be con-
alous tested, that of two Combatants, who have
ment equal Strength and equal Courage, he is most
Cæsar likely to have the better who has the most
or a address ; so in a contention and prize of
is a Poetry, between persons who have equal force
utur of mind, he will be certain to have the ad-
and vantage, who is the best instructed to use his
the strength.

and if any of the enemies to Regularity will
ng of give themselves the trouble to peruse the
ffius Oedipus of Sophocles, with an impartial

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eye, he will easily discern how instrumental the Poetical Art is in leading him from Surprise to Surprise, from Compassion to Terror, and from Terror to Compassion again, without giving him so much as a time to breathe; and he will as easily discover, how the Religion that is every where intermix'd with the Play, shews all the Surprises, even when he least expects this, as so many immediate successive effects of a particular Dreadful Providence, which make them come like so many Thunder-claps from a serene Heaven to confound and astonish him.

A Poet is capacitated by that which is commonly call'd Regularity, to excite the ordinary Passions more powerfully by the constitution of the Fable, and the influence which that must necessarily have both upon the words and thoughts; and Religion besides the Influence it will have upon the ordinary Passions, will be to a Poet, who has force and skill enough to make his advantage of it, a perpetual source of extraordinary Passion, which is commonly call'd Enthusiasm for the sentiments and the expressions.

For what concerns Regularity, or the exciting of ordinary Passion, enough has been said already. Your Lordship has particularly made the Publick a Present, which is, I confess, but little in Volume but is magnificent

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nificent in Value and Ornament; 'tis a Present in Jewels, which casts a further lustre than Treasures that take up a larger space, and is more solid to those who are near it. Our Writers have been sufficiently told, that writing Regularly is writing Morally, Decently, Justly, Naturally, Reasonably. The Design, my Lord, of the following Treatise is to shew of what use Religion may be to the advancement of Poetry. But because all that has been said concerning Regularity is so necessary a preparative to this Design, that it would be wholly useless without it, I hope your Lordship will not think it to be foreign to my purpose, if at a time when the Rules are neglected by some, and slighted by others, I bestow a little time in proving the necessity of observing those; without the strict observance of which, the following Treatise will be an empty amusement, and we must absolutely despair of making any advancement in Poetry.

The necessity of observing Rules to the attaining a perfection in Poetry is so very apparent, that he who will give himself the trouble of Reflecting, cannot easily doubt of it. Rules are necessary even in all the inferiour Arts, as in Painting and Musick. If any one should pretend to draw a Picture without having ever been taught, or without knowing or practi-

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practising any thing of Perspective or Proportion, but should pretend to succeed alone by the natural force of his Fancy, that man would certainly be esteem'd a very Impudent and Impertinent person.

Your Lordship knows that it is the very same thing in Musick that it is in Painting. If any one should pretend to compose in parts, without understanding the grounds, that person would infallibly render himself very contemptible. Now if they please by Rules in a less noble Art, can they reasonably expect to please without them in one that is more noble? If they please not by Rules in Poetry, how must they please? By Chance! For this is certain, that they must do it by one or the other, for there is no third way.

There is nothing in Nature that is great and beautiful, without Rule and Order; and the more Rule and Order and Harmony we find in the objects that strike our senses, the more worthy and noble we esteem them. I humbly conceive that it is the same in Art, and particularly in Poetry, which ought to be an exact imitation of Nature. Now Nature, taken in a stricter sense, is nothing but that Rule and Order and Harmony which we find in the visible Creation. The Universe owes its admirable beauty to

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the Proportion, Situation and Dependance of its parts. And the little World, which we call Man, owes not only its Health and Ease and Pleasure, nay, the continuance of its very Being to the Regularity of Mechanical motion, but even the strength too of its boasted Reason, and the piercing force of those aspiring thoughts, which are able to pass the bounds that circumscribe the Universe. As Nature is Order and Rule and Harmony in the visible World, so Reason is the very same throughout the invisible Creation. For Reason is Order and the Result of Order. And nothing that is Irregular, as far as it is Irregular, ever was or ever can be either Natural or Reasonable. Whatever God Created he designed it Regular, and as the rest of the Creatures cannot swerve in the least from the Eternal Laws pre-ordain'd for them, without becoming fearful or odious to us; so Man, whose mind is a Law to itself, can never in the least transgress that Law, without lessning his Reason, and debasing his Nature. In fine, whatever is Irregular, either in the Visible or Invisible World, is to the person who thinks right, except in some very extraordinary cases, either Hateful or Contemptible.

comps both Nature and Reason, which
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two in a larger acceptation is Nature, owe their Greatness, their Beauty, their Majesty, to their perpetual Order; for Order at first made the face of things so beautiful, and the cessation of that Order would once more bring in Chaos; so Poetry, which is an imitation of Nature, must do the same thing. I can neither have Greatness or Real Beauty, if it swerves from the Laws which Reason severely prescribes it, and the more Irregular any Poetical Composition is, the nearer it comes to extravagance and confusion, and to nonsense, which is nothing.

But, as in some of the numberless parts which constitute this beauteous all, there are some appearing irregularities, which parts notwithstanding contribute with the rest to compleat the Harmony of universal Nature; and as there are some seeming Irregularities even in the wonderful Dispensations of the Supreme and Sovereign Reason, as the oppression of the good, and flourishing of the bad, which yet at the bottom are rightly adjusted, and wisely compensated, and are purposely appointed by Divine Fore-knowledge for the carrying on the profound Designs of Providence; so, if we may compare great things with small, in the creation of the accomplish'd Poem, some things may at first sight be seemingly against Reason, which

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which yet at the bottom are perfectly Regular, because they are indispensably necessary to the admirable conduct of a great and a just Design.

No man knows better than your Lordship, that the Renown'd Masters among the Ancients, Homer and Virgil, &c. had too much Capacity, and too much Discernment, not to see the necessity of knowing and practising the Rules which Reason and Philosophy have prescrib'd to Poets. They wrote not with a little narrow Design to please a Tumultuous transitory assembly, or a handful of men who were call'd their Countrymen; They wrote to their fellow Citizens of the Universe, to all Countries and to all Ages; and they were perfectly convinc'd that tho Caprice and Extravagance may please the multitude, who are always fluctuating, and always uncertain; yet that nothing but what is great in Reason and Nature, could be able to delight and instruct Mankind. They were clearly convinc'd that nothing could transmit their Immortal works to posterity, but something like that harmonious Order which maintains the Universe; that it was partly to that, they were to owe that wondrous merit, which could be able to render their Fame eternal, to extend and perpetuate the very languages in which they

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writ, and to illustrate the glory of their Countries by their own.

Your Lordship knows that it was towards the beginning of the last Century, that the French, a subtle and discerning Nation, began to be sensible of this, and upon it several of their extraordinary men, both Poets and Philosophers, began to cultivate Criticism. Upon which there follow'd two very remarkable things. For first, the cultivating of the Poetical Art advanc'd their Genius's to such a height, as was unknown to France before; and secondly, the appearing of those great Genius's, was very instrumental in spreading their language thro all the Christian World; and in raising the esteem of their Nation to that degree, that it naturally prepar'd the way for their Intrigues of State, and facilitated the execution of their vast Designs.

My Lord, these alterations happen'd in France, while the French reform'd the structure of their Poems, by the noble models of ancient Architects; and your Lordship knows very well, that the very contrary fell out among us; while, notwithstanding your generous attempt to reform us, we resolv'd with an injudicious obstinacy to adhere to our Gothick and Barbarous manner. For in the first place, our Stage has degenerated

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not only from the taste of Nature, but from the greatness it had in the time of Shakespear, in whose Coriolanus and Cassius we see something of the Invincible Spirit of the Romans; but in most of our Heroes which have lately appear'd on the Stage, Love has been still the predominant passion, whether they have been Grecian or Roman Heroes; which is false in Morality, and of scandalous instruction, and as false and absurd in Physicks. For Ambition makes a man a Tyrant to himself, as well as it does to others; and where it once prevails, enslaves the Reason, and subdues all other Passions. And it was for this very cause, if your Lordship will allow me to make this digression, that in the two Tragedies that I writ my self, I made Love a subordinate Passion, and subjected it in the one to Glory, and in the other to Friendship; that so I might make them fit to entertain the wisest of our Sex, and the best and most virtuous of the other. And it is impossible to tell you with what extream satisfaction I heard that the last of them was not displeasing to you.

But secondly, At the same time that the French has been growing almost an universal Language, the English has been so far from diffusing itself in so vast a manner, that I know by experience that a man may

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travel o're most of these Western parts of Europe, without meeting with three Foreigners, who have any tolerable knowledge of it. And yet the English is more strong, more full, more sounding, more significant, and more harmonious than the French. I know very well, that a great many will be unwilling to allow the last ; but I appeal to your Lordship if this is not a convincing proof of it, that we have Blank Verse which is not inharmonious, and the French pretend to no Poetical Numbers, without the assistance of Rhime.

But it may perhaps be alledg'd, that the reason why the French has got the advantage of our language, is partly from their situation on the Continent, partly from the intrigues and affairs which they have with their Neighbours, and partly because their Language has more affinity with one of the learned Languages. But to this I answer, that the Germans are as advantageously seated as the French for diffusing their Language ; and the Spanish Tongue is rather nearer related to the Latin than is the French ; and all the World knows, that towards the beginning of the last Century, the House of Austria was full as busie with their Neighbours, as the House of Bourbon is now ; and yet then neither the German

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nor the Spanish Tongue made any considerable progress. I will not deny, but that the situation and affairs of the French may have been of advantage to them in the diffusing their Language; but 'tis certainly the Learning of any Nation that is most instrumental in it. I make no doubt, but that in Learning, which is useful and necessary, and barely solid, without ornament, we far surpass the French. Our practical Physicians have more Reputation than theirs even in France itself; and our practical Divines have acquir'd more Fame, throughout the Northern Countries of Europe, than either the natives of those places, or any of the Modern French Divines, whether they are Reform'd or Papistical. And this last is therefore the more considerable, because they writ in our mother Tongue, whereas the Physicians have employed a learned Language. But I am very much inclin'd to believe, that 'tis the polite Learning of any Nation, that contributes most to the extending its Language, and Poetry is the branch of polite Learning, which is the most efficacious in it. In order to the proving this, I desire your Lordships leave, to examine who they are who are most Instrumental in making a Language pass the bounds which confine the original speakers of it. And
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they seem to me to be the Gentlemen of neighbouring Nations, who have time and opportunity to visit foreign Countries, and are capacitated by their Fortunes and their Educations, to cultivate Languages, which they were not born to speak. For, besides that these are the persons who are the most capacitated to learn them, they have by the variety and multiplicity of their conversation most opportunities to spread them. Now the motives that for the most part incite Gentlemen to study are two, Pleasure and Vanity. But Pleasure and Vanity will find their account abundantly more in polite Learning, than in Literature, which is barely solid. For, polite Learning is more easie, and has more of Imagination in it, and instructs them much better how to varnish their defects, and render them agreeable to one another. 'Tis chiefly then the polite Learning of any Nation that engages the Gentlemen of foreign Countries to apply themselves to study the Language of that Nation. But even of polite Learning, Poetry appears to be the most agreeable, and most attractive branch, because it is the most moving. And we find by experience, that in the Learning of those Languages which have been most generally known, Poetry has made a very considerable figure. Gentlemen then in all
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likelihoood will apply themselves most eagerly to the study of that Language, whose Poetry is very agreeable to them. But that Poetry must be most agreeable to the generality of Gentlemen which is most moving and most instructive. For, tho Gentlemen study to please themselves, yet if they are men of sense, they will not be for empty pleasure, but will endeavour to be instructed and delighted together. Besides, when Gentlemen begin to study the Poetry of any language, the first thing they understand is the reasonable part of it. For the fineness of the Imaginative part, which depends in great measure upon force of words, and upon the beauty of expression, must lye conceal'd from them in a good degree till they are perfect in the Language. Thus the Poetry of that Language which is most reasonable and most instructive, must in all likelihoood have most attraction for the Gentlemen of neighbouring Nations; and we have shewn above, that that is the most reasonable and most instructive Poetry, which is the most Regular.

My Lord, upon this foot it is easie to determine whether our Poetry or the French has most attractions for the rest of Europe. This is plain, that Moliere, Corneille and Racine and Boileau are known in a manner

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to all the Christian World ; whereas Spenser and Milton, Ben Johnson and Shakespear are strangers as it were to all the world, excepting the Subjects of Great Britain. I believe that our Language, by reason of the dependance that it has upon the Saxon, is not very difficult to be learnt by the people of the Northern Countries ; and in short, many of their Clergy have learnt enough of it, to make their advantage of our Ecclesiastical Writings. But both they and their Gentlemen are almost wholly strangers to our Poetry, whereas the French Poets are extremely well known to them. But here some angry people will immediately ask if I affirm that our own is inferiour to the French Poetry. To satisfie both them and the Truth, I am oblig'd to declare ; at the same time submitting this matter to be decided by your Lordship in the last appeal, that I believe we have naturally more force, and more elevation than the French ; that several things in Shakespear are superiour to any which the French Theatre has produc'd ; and that in some little Poems, which either requir'd no symmetry, or were writ by those who very well knew how to practise it, we are absolutely superiour to them ; that at last I am not so much delivering my own thoughts, as the opinions

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of others; that the very design I have even in affirming what I do, is to do what lies in my little capacity to put our Writers in a way to make our Neighbours, and with them all Europe, sensible of the advantage which we have by Nature? that even our natural force must receive accession from Art, and augment in proportion as the French has done; that both our Force and our Spirit will in all likelihood be augmented by Skill, as address in the use of our Weapons very often adds both to our Force and Courage. That a Poem with a Fable is like a Human Body, and that the weakness of any one part, influences and disables in some degree those which in themselves are strong; that if we are not shock'd at our own Irregularity, 'tis because it has the advantage of long Habitude, for we have been us'd to it from our Infancy; but that to our Neighbours, who have constantly been us'd to Art and Conduct, it must seem as awkward and as disagreeable, as our Gothick Cathedrals would to those Italians who have always frequented St Peter's; and that what I barely call Irregular here, would be term'd by them Indecent, Immoral, Unjust, Unreasonable, Unnatural. In fine, I appeal to your Lordship, whether the French Dramatick Writers are not believ'd superiour to the

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the English by all the rest of Europe; that at the same time I am convinc'd, that our Writers having naturally more elevation, and our Language more Harmony than theirs, and both our Writers and Language more force; we want only Art to make ourselves as superiour to them in Poetry as we formerly were in Empire.

And here, my Lord, I fancy that I see the enemies to Regularity in a little confusion; they are too well satisfied of your Lordships Ability and Impartiality, to decline your Jurisdiction; and they cannot but remember to their sorrow that you have formerly given the Cause against them.

Upon supposition then that for the future they will instruct themselves in the Poetical Art; I must leave it to your Lordship to determine whether the following Treatise may be of any service to them, and give them still another advantage over the French, by directing them to choose, and to manage their subjects in such a manner as may make them most susceptible of Poetry; and that is to find, or make them Religions; a piece of Criticism which I know not how escap'd all the French Critics.

Your Lordship knows very well that some of them, as for instance, Boileau, discerning

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Concerning the actual prebeminence of the Ancients, have fondly believ'd that they were superiour to us by Nature; and that others, as Perrault, very justly disdaining to own such a natural superiority, have very unjustly deny'd their actual prebeminence. The first part of the following Treatise was intended to shew, that the Ancient Poets had that actual prebeminence, but that they deriv'd it from joyning their Religion with their Poetry; upon which I believe they were thrown at first by chance. The Design of the second part is to shew, that the Moderns, by incorporating Poetry with the Religion reveal'd to us in Sacred Writ, may come to equal the Ancients. But two things must be always suppos'd: the one, That the Poets have force and skill equal to the subjects they treat of; and a sacred subject requires ten times more of both than a prophane one. The other is, That this is not to be extended to those sorts of Poetry, in which the Moderns cannot possibly make use of their Religion, with the same advantage that the Grecians and Romans employ'd theirs, as Epic, Pastoral and Amorous Poetry. My Lord, The ultimate end of the ensuing discourse is to shew that the intention of Poetry and the Christian Religion being alike to move the affections, they may very well

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well be made instrumental to the advancing each other. I have reason to believe that this Design will not be unacceptable to your Lordship, not only upon the account of Religion it self, but as you are an Encourager of Arts, and a great States-man, who know that the bare endeavour to advance an Art among us, is an effort to augment the Learning, and consequently the Reputation and consequently the Power of a great people; that the flourishing of the established Religion must have a necessary influence upon the publick Prosperity; that he who does any thing to recommend Christianity to the minds of others, endeavours to promote the common good; as on the other side, He who breaks in upon the Revelation makes a dangerous attempt not only upon the Constitution, but upon Government in general; that there never was, nor ever can be any flourishing Government without a Reveald Religion; that several English-men have lost, together with the Religion of their Ancestors, their Honour, their Integrity, and their Publick Spirit; and that open and avowed Deism has grown up among us, together with Abominable Corruptions, not only in the manners of private men, but in the administration of publick affairs.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

But now, my Lord, I have been so intent upon my Cause, that it has almost made me forget, that for my having detain'd you so long, I ought to beg pardon not only of your Lordship, but of your Friends and the Publick. That by writing this I am guilty of diverting you from writing or speaking your self something which is much more Important, either at Home, or in that Illustrious Assembly, of which you are so solid and shining an Ornament. I humbly desire of your Lordship to excuse the Liberty I have taken, and to believe that I am, with the profoundest Respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most Oblig'd

Most Humble, and

Most Obedient Servant,

John Dennis.

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T H E
ADVANCEMENT
A N D
R E F O R M A T I O N
O F
Modern Poetry.

P A R T I.

C H A P. I.

The Design of the Work.

Nothing can shew the excellence
of Poetry more, than that it
has always been esteem'd by
the best of men, and that
there has been no extraordinary man in
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the world since it came to any perfection, but who has commended it or encourag'd it.

And yet, to the Confusion of most who have given themselves time to think of it, Poetry, that has been encourag'd by so many great Princes, is believ'd by several to have degenerated, rather than to have improv'd by Time; while Physicks, Metaphysicks, and some other Arts, that have been very little, or not at all encourag'd, have advanc'd considerably.

And what will appear to be yet more strange, the very efforts that the Moderns have made to advance Poetry have done it hurt, because they have proceeded upon such erroneous principles, as have not only made their attempts unsuccessful, but have caus'd them to mistake their Errors for their Impotence.

For, some of the Moderns, who have been great Admirers of their Contemporaries, which is a modest expression for themselves, will by no means allow that the Ancients have excell'd us. From which opinion Presumption has follow'd, and from Presumption Security, and from Security Idleness. But

But Despair on the other side has done a great deal more harm than Presumption has done on that. For some who have been of opinion that the Ancients have surpass'd us, have believ'd that they have done so, because they were in themselves superiour to us ; from which it has happen'd that they have been servilely contented with following their old Masters , and most of the Best of the Modern Poetry has been but a Copy of the Ancient.

These different Opinions have occasion'd Disputes, and these Disputes have produc'd Quarrels, which have been maintain'd with a great deal of Heat on both sides. The favourers of the Moderns have treated their Adversaries as dejected little-soul'd persons, who have a base opinion of themselves and of Human Nature, which last they have much ado to forgive them, because they are included in the Censure.

For, How can it be, say they, but a Scandalous Despondence that obliges us to prefer other men to our selves, when Reason gives us the preference. For this, they say, is past all Dispute, that they who excel others in the same kinds

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of Writing, must have some advantage over them. And that advantage must be either from without or from within, or from the subjects they treat of. Now we can make it appear, say the Favourers of the Moderns, that the Ancient Poets had no external or internal advantage over us, and that the advantage of the subject is rather on our side. And this is what the Favourers of the Moderns alledge for themselves. The Partizans of the Ancients have on the other side treated the Favourers of the Moderns, as persons that are absolutely ignorant and without taste.

That the Ancients have excelled us in the greatness of Poetry they pretend to prove from the Authority of all ; who have universally been acknowledged to be the best Judges. For, say they, the consent of these, where the question is concerning a thing, that is rather to be felt, than to be demonstrated, is of the last importance. We defy, say they, any of the Favourers of the Moderns, to name so much as one Modern Critick, who has any Reputation in the world , who does not acknowledge that the Ancients surpass us in the greatness of Poetry.

try. For the few, say they, who have asserted the preheminance of the Moderns, have immediately rendred themselves ridiculous to all men, who have any understanding in these affairs, and at length to all the rest, excepting a little handful of men, whose arrogance and obstinacy and extravagant vanity has been a Comedy to the rest.

So that the consent of the best Criticks, continue they, implies the consent of all, and the consent of mankind for so many several ages, concerning a thing that is rather to be felt, than to be demonstrated, is, if not a convincing Proof, at least a very strong Presumption. But what has been the event of this Dispute on both sides? Why the probability of the Arguments, instead of working conviction, has only exasperated the Spirits of the Parties; and the Favourers of the Moderns have treated the Lovers of the Ancients as so many slavish Pedants, and these on the other side the Favourers of the Moderns as so many ignorant Fools.

Amidst this diversity of opinions and these contentious ferments, I thought I should do an important service to a most

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noble art, if I could contribute any thing to the reconciling the common Friends to Poetry, that they might endeavour the advancement of the common cause with greater force united.

In order then to the calming the Fury of the Contending Parties, I shall endeavour to extort Important Concessions from both, and oblige on the one side, the Favourers of the Moderns, to acknowledge that the Ancients are not so weak as to make the Moderns presume; and engage at the same time the Partisans of the Ancients to own, that the Ancients are not in themselves so strong, as to make the Moderns despair.

And in order to the gaining this point with the greater ease, and the making my self an Agreeable Mediator of Peace, I shall endeavour to make an Impartial enquiry into the merits of the Cause, and try to engage both Parties by turns, by supporting their just pretensions. And whereas the Favourers of the Moderns have justly alledged, that all Writers who surpass others in the same kinds of Writings, must do it from some internal, or external advantage, or from
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the subject it self, I shall endeavour to shew in the two following Chapters, that the Ancients could not derive their preheminance from any external or internal advantage, and afterwards we shall proceed to examine whether they deriv'd it from the subjects they treated of.

C H A P. II.

That the Ancients did not excel the Moderns by any External Advantage.

THe External Advantages which one Writer has over another are chiefly two. The Assistance which he receives from the Age in which he writes, and the Encouragement he meets with. Now we shall shew that the Ancients did not surpass the Moderns on the account of either of these.

First, they had no advantage in the Assistance which they receiv'd from the Age in which they writ; on the con-

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trary, the advantage here is clearly on the side of the Moderns: For good Thinking is the foundation of good Writing, both in Eloquence and in Poetry. Now thoughts are but the Images of things, and our knowledge of things is greater than that of the Ancients. For several which they knew are better known to us, and we know several which they never knew at all. How many Arts have the Moderns improv'd? How many wonderful Inventions are owing to them? And how many amazing Discoveries? From which we have a supply of Thoughts and Images that is never to be exhausted. So that in the Assistance which we Receive from the Age in which we live, we have the advantage of the Ancients.

Nor, secondly, is it from the encouragement which they received, that the Ancient Poets excell'd the Moderns: Tho at the same time I really believe that Encouragement was one of the causes of the Ancient excellence of the Orators. For tho good Thinking is the foundation of good Writing both in Eloquence and in Poetry, and the Moderns are qualify'd

fy'd to think as Reasonably and as Subtly as the Ancients thought, yet 'tis in these Arts as it is in Architecture, there can be no Beauty nor Greatness without Foundation, but 'tis not the Foundation that makes the Greatness or Beauty. The chief design of Eloquence is to persuade, and he persuading the most effectually who moves his Hearers the most; that which makes the Greatness and Beauty of Eloquence, is not so much the thinking rightly, tho without that there can be no Excellence, as those violent Passions that reign and tyrannize over our Souls in the Speeches of the Ancient Orators, which they chiefly deriv'd from Ambition. For the moving their Popular Assemblies among the Ancient *Grecians* and *Romans*, being almost the only way among them to arrive at the chief Honours of the State, it can be no wonder to those who reflect upon the Force of Ambition, and the Stings it infixes into the minds of men, that the Ancient *Grecians* and *Romans* should be so great Masters of Eloquence. For, being instigated and stung by Ambition, they not only were supported in the taking such pains as the
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Moderns are utterly incapable of taking; because they have not the same incentive to sustain them, but being mov'd and fir'd by Ambition themselves, they the more easily rowz'd and inflam'd others; for if any one happens to urge, that the Love of Glory being alike inseparable from Moderns and Ancients, they have equal incentives to Eloquence; I desire him to take notice, that there is a very considerable difference between the Love of Glory barely considered, and that which is joyn'd to Ambition, which is the desire of Power and Place. For I desire him to consider, what Nourishment and Force the Love of Glory that was in the minds of the Ancient Orators, must necessarily have received from the Tumultuous applauses of the popular Assemblies, and the Glorious Recompences that ensued upon them.

But now if any one thinks, that he has here found out the Reason, why the Ancients surpass'd us in the greater Poetry, because Passion making the Greatness and Beauty of Poetry, as well as it does of Eloquence, (which it certainly does, as shall be clearly shewn anon)

anon) and Passion receiving access from Encouragement, the Ancient Poets writ with a Force superiour to that of the Moderns, only because they were more encouraged: if any one, I say, thinks at this rate, he will find himself very much mistaken. For tho I am convinc'd that Encouragement does very much, yet I am satisfied that the difference is not chiefly owing to that; for in the first place, tho the encouragement which the Ancients gave, was more general than that which the Moderns have met with, yet some of the Moderns have been as much encourag'd as most of the Ancients were, and yet fall very much short of them in the greater Poetry, of which *Boileau* and *Racine* are two Illustrious Examples. In the second place, *Homer*, the most admirable of all the Ancients, was not at all encourag'd. In the third place, one of the Moderns receiv'd no encouragement, who has often transcendently soar'd above both Ancients and Moderns, and that is *Milton*, as shall be shewn in its proper place. And, lastly, Comedy was as much encourag'd by the *Grecians* and *Romans*, as any other
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fort of Poetry ; witness what the *Athenians* did for *Aristophanes*, and *Scipio* and *Lelius* for *Terence* ; and yet I am perswaded that the Moderns have surpass'd the Ancients in Comedy, and shall give my Reasons below why I make no scruple of preferring *Moliere*, and two or three of our own Comick Poets, to *Terence* and *Aristophanes*. So that we must seek for another Cause of the excellence of the Ancient Poets, than the encouragement they met with.

There are three other things which may be numbred among external advantages, and those are the Climates in which the Ancient Poets liv'd, and the Languages in which they writ, and the Liberty which they enjoy'd. But these are not the chief things from which the Ancients deriv'd their Preheminence. For the greatest of the *Lyrick* Poets writ in a Country of downright Blockheads, and one of the greatest of the *Epick* Poets in a Country that had lost its Liberty, and besides the *Grecians* enjoy'd all the advantages of their Climate, and their Language and their Liberty, long after the Decay of Poetry: 'Tis true, indeed, the *Grecians* and *Romans* did
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derive one real Excellence from the Beauty of their Language, and that was the Harmony of their Versification, in which the Moderns are not likely to equal them. But Harmony of Versification is not the chief thing in Poetry, nor does the chief Excellence of the Ancients consist in such a Harmony. And thus we have shewn that they did not derive their Preheminence from any thing that was external: Let us examine in the next Chapter, whether the Ancients deriv'd their Excellence from any internal advantage.

CHAP. III.

*That the Ancients did not surpass
the Moderns from any Internal
Advantage.*

THere is nothing more certain, than that he who handles any subject excellently, must do it by the power of his Internal Faculties. And consequently he who treats any subject admirably, has

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has an inward advantage over him who treats it scurvily. But either that advantage is naturally deriv'd from the subject, or it is not. If it is naturally deriv'd from the subject, in that case we can never pretend to deny that the Ancients had an inward advantage over the Moderns. All that we shall endeavour to prove, is, that they had no internal advantage over them, abstracted from the nature of the subjects of which they treated.

Now all the internal advantages, which the Ancients may be supposed to have had over the Moderns, may be reduc'd to four. Divine Inspiration. Inspiration by Dæmons. A Natural Superiority of the Faculties of the Soul. A greater Degree of Vertue.

The first advantage that the Ancient Poets may be suppos'd to have had over the Moderns, is from Divine Inspiration. Now the Ancient Poets were the Heathen Theologues, and to affirm that the Spirit of God should inspire those to teach the Adoration of Idols, and inspire them more than he does the Moderns, who are of the true Religion, would be equally absurd and blasphemous.

Nor,

Nor, Secondly, can they have any advantage by Inspiration of Dæmons. For in the first place, 'tis absurd to give a supernatural Cause of an effect of which we can give a very natural one. But we can give a very natural Cause of the Excellence of the Ancient Poets, as shall be shewn anon. In the second place the Ancients before *Socrates*, ow'd all their Moral Philosophy to their Poets. Now tho that Philosophy was only dispers'd up and down in sentences, yet had it a natural tendency to the forming that system, which afterwards the Disciples of *Socrates* fram'd from the mouth of their Master. And as that system was the utter overthrow of the Heathen Revelation, as we shall shew anon, any thing that had a natural tendency to the forming that system, could not be the work of Dæmons. But Thirdly, supposing the Ancient *Græcian* Poets were really inspired by Dæmons, it is hard to imagine that they should receive a greater advantage from such an Inspiration as that, than the Moderns, who apply themselves to Sacred Poetry, should have from Divine Assistance.

Nor,

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Nor, Thirdly, Can the Ancient Poets be suppos'd to have had a greater share of virtue than the Moderns. For all the *Grecian* Poets who were famous for the greater Poetry, flourish'd before there was in that part of the world any system of Morality. And perhaps most of the *Roman* Poetry is only a Copy of the *Grecian*. Now it is hard to imagine, that they who had no system of Morality, and no supernatural support, should transcend the Moderns in Vertue, who have a perfect system of Morality and Divine Assistance.

Nor, Fourthly, and principally, had the Ancient any natural superiority of Faculties over the Modern Poets. For if they surpass the Moderns in the greater Poetry, out of any superiority of Faculties, which they had naturally as they were the Ancients, it must be by a superiority of understanding or imagination, or both. But first, it was not from any superiority of understanding. Because from hence it would follow, that the Minds of men grow weaker by succession of ages, and then the Ancients would have surpass'd one another, as they preceded in time. Or
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Orpheus and *Musæus* would have excell'd
Homer, *Alcæus* and *Stetichorus* *Pindar*,
Thespis *Euripides*, and *Aischylus* *Sophocles*;
Tyrtæus *Virgil*, and *Alcmon* *Horace*,
which is all absolutely false. But then
again, if any one urges, that if the An-
cients did not surpass one another ac-
cording to precedence of time, it was
because art and experience were requir'd
to the perfection of Poetry, and the
younger in Time had the Advantage of
the elder both in Art and Experience;
to that I answer, that some of the Po-
ets, who are younger in Time, have
perhaps the advantage of those who are
older, more by Nature than they have
by Art. For the Tragick and Lyrick
Poets, who preceded *Sophocles* and *Pin-*
dar, come more behind them in true
Genius than they go before them in
Time. But now if the Ancients did
not surpass one another according to
priority of Time, why should they ex-
cel us? If it be objected, that several
very extraordinary men happen'd to be
born at such and such particular times;
to that I answer, that this arriv'd by
providence or by chance. If you al-
ledge that it fell out by chance, to that

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I reply, that all the great Poets among the *Grecians* flourish'd within four hundred years of one another, and all the great Poets among the *Romans* within two hundred years; and then let me ask you, whither this look'd like chance. But if you pretend, that these men at these particular times, were design'd such excellent Poets by Providence, and for that very end were form'd with faculties so much superiour to those who preceded them, and who came after them; then let me ask you, for what design Providence should so manifestly alter the course of nature, or why that which fell out by Providence then, may not by Providence arrive again.

Besides, if the Ancient Poets excell'd the Moderns by a superiority of understanding, it would necessarily follow that they understood their Subjects better; which is false: For the Subjects of the Epick, Tragick and Lyrick Poets, are the virtues, vices, and passions of men, which the Moderns ought to understand at least as well as the Ancients, because they have all the knowledge of the Ancients, and their own improvement besides.

Thus

Thus have I endeavour'd to show, that we have no reason to despair of equalling the Ancients, because of the Transcendency of their understandings. And what has been said about their understandings, may serve to shew that they as little excell'd the Moderns in their Imaginations, as they did in the other; tho something more may be said for the last, for the violence of the Passions, proceeding from the force of the Imagination, and the corruption of Mankind, from the violence of the Passions, and the corruption of Mankind growing greater, as the World grows older; it follows, that the Imaginations of Men must grow stronger as the World grows older.

But lastly, how vain it is to urge, that the Ancients excell'd the Moderns by a superiority of Faculties, when it will appear a little lower, as clear as the Sun, that one of the Moderns very often excells them both in his Thoughts and Spirit.

Thus we have endeavour'd to shew, that the Ancients did not excell the Moderns in the greater Poetry, from any external advantage, that is, from the

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assistance which they had, from the Ages in which they writ, or from the Encouragement with which they met. We have shewn too, that they did not surpass them from any Internal advantage, whether it was from Divine Inspiration, or Inspiration by Dæmons, or Transcendency of Vertue, or superiority of Faculties. The advantage then, which the Ancient Poets had over the Moderns, if they had any advantage, must be deriv'd from the Subjects of which they treated.

CHAP. IV.

*That the Ancient Poets deriv'd
their greatness from the Nature
of their Subjects.*

IF the Ancient Poets excell'd the Moderns in the greatness of Poetry; that is, in Epick Poetry, in Tragedy, and in the greater Ode; they must necessarily derive their preheminance from the Subjects of which they treated, since it has
been

been plainly made to appear, that they could not Derive it from any External or Internal advantage. And it follows, that the Subjects which were handled by the Ancients, must be different from those which have been treated of by the Moderns. And if the Poems which have been writ by the Ancients of the forementioned kinds were very much greater than those which have been produced by the Moderns, why then it follows, that the subjects were very different. But here the Favourers of the Moderns assert, that the advantage which is to be drawn from the Subject, is purely on the side of the Moderns. For who, for Example, will compare the achievements of *Achilles* and *Æneas*, the event of which was only the reducing two pitiful paltry Bourgs, with the glorious actions of some of our Modern Captains. But then the Partizans of the Ancients reply, that there is a difference between one subject and another, which their adversaries seem not to have thought of. For, say they, humane Subjects, can never differ so much among themselves, as Sacred Subjects differ from Humane, for the difference

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between

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between the Two last is as great as that between God and Man ; which we know is infinite. Now, say they, sacred Subjects are infinitely more susceptible of the greatness of Poetry, than prophane ones can be. And the Subjects of the Ancients in the forementioned Poems were sacred. Now that we may engage the Lovers of the Ancients in their turns by supporting their just pretensions, let us endeavour to show in the following Chapters, that Sacred Poems must be greater than Prophane ones can be, supposing equality of Genius, and equal art in the Writers, and that the Poems of the Ancients in the forementioned kinds were sacred. But in order to the doing that, we must declare what Poetry is, and what is its chief Excellence.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

*The Passion is the chief thing in
in Poetry, and that all Passion
is either ordinary Passion, or En-
thusiasm.*

BUT before we proceed let us define Poetry ; which is the first time that a Definition has been given of that noble Art : For neither Ancient nor Modern Criticks have defin'd Poetry in general.

Poetry then is an imitation of Nature by a pathetick and numerous Speech. Let us explain it.

As Poetry is an Art, it must be an Imitation of Nature. That the instrument with which it makes its Imitation is Speech need not be disputed. That that Speech, must be Musical, no one can doubt : For Numbers distinguish the parts of Poetick Diction from the periods of Prose. Now Numbers are nothing but articulate sounds, and their

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pauses measur'd by their proper proportions of time. And the periods of Prosaick Diction are articulate sounds, and their pauses unmeasur'd by such proportions. That the Speech, by which Poetry makes its Imitation, must be pathetick is evident; for Passion is still more necessary to it than Harmony. For Harmony only distinguishes its Instrument from that of Prose, but Passion distinguishes its very nature and character. For therefore Poetry is Poetry, because it is more passionate and sensual than Prose. A Discourse that is writ in very good Numbers, if it wants Passion can be but measur'd Prose. But a Discourse that is every where extremely pathetick, and consequently every where bold and figurative, is certainly Poetry without Numbers.

Passion then is the Characteristical mark of Poetry, and consequently must be every where. For where-ever a Discourse is not pathetick, there it is Prosaick. As Passion in a Poem must be every where, so Harmony is usually diffus'd throughout it. But Passion answers the two ends of Poetry better than Harmony can do, and upon that account is
preferable

preferable to it : For first it pleases more, which is evident : For Passion can please without Harmony, but Harmony tires without Passion. And in Tragedy and in Epick Poetry a man may instruct without Harmony, but never without Passion : For the one instructs by Admiration, and the other by Compassion and Terror. And as for the greater Ode, if it wants Passion, it becomes Hateful and Intolerable, and its Sentences grow Contemptible.

Passion is the Characteristical mark of Poetry, and therefore it must be every where ; for without Passion there can be no Poetry, no more than there can be Painting. And tho the Poet and the Painter describe action, they must describe it with Passion. Let any one who beholds a piece of Painting, where the Figures are shewn in action, conclude that if the Figures are without Passion the Painting is contemptible. There must be Passion every where in Poetry and Painting, and the more Passion there is, the better the Poetry and the Painting, unless the Passion is too much for the subject ; and the Painter and the Poet arrive at the height of
their

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their Art, when they describe a great deal of Action with a great deal of Passion. It is plain then from what has been said, that Passion in Poetry must be every where, for where there is no Passion there can be no Poetry, but that which we commonly call Passion, cannot be every where in any Poem. There must be Passion then, that must be distinct from ordinary Passion, and that must be Enthusiasm. I call that ordinary Passion, whose cause is clearly comprehended by him who feels it, whether it be Admiration, Terror or Joy ; and I call the very same Passions Enthusiasms, when their cause is not clearly comprehended by him who feels them. And those Enthusiastick Passions are sometimes simple, and sometimes complicated, of all which we shall shew examples lower. And thus I have shewn that the chief thing in Poetry is Passion ; but here the Reader is desir'd to observe, that by Poetry we mean Poetry in general, and the Body of Poetry ; for as for the form or soul of particular Poems, that is allow'd by all to be a Fable. But Passion is the chief thing in the Body of Poetry, as Spirit is in the Human

Human Body. For without Spirit the Body languishes, and the Soul is impotent : Now every thing that they call Spirit or Genius in Poetry, in short, every thing that pleases, and consequently moves in the Poetick Diction, is Passion, whether it be ordinary or Enthusiastick.

And thus we have shewn what the chief excellence in the Body of Poetry is, which we have prov'd to be Passion. Let us now proceed to the proofs of what we propounded, that sacred subjects are more susceptible of Passion than prophane ones, and that the subjects of the Ancients were sacred in their greater Poetry, I mean either sacred in their own natures, or by their manner of handling them.

CHAP. VI.

*That Passion is more to be deriv'd
from a Sacred Subject than from
a Prophane one.*

WE have prov'd that Passion is the chief thing in Poetry, and that Spirit or Genius, and in short every thing that moves is Passion. Now if the chief thing in Poetry be Passion, why then the chief thing in great Poetry must be great Passion. We have shewn too, that Passion in Poetry is of two sorts, ordinary Passion or Enthusiasm. Let us now proceed to convince the Reader, that a sacred Poem is more susceptible of Passion than a prophane one can be; which to effect, let us shew two things, that a sacred subject is as susceptible of ordinary passions as a prophane one can be, and more susceptible of the Enthusiastick.

The first is evident from experience: For the Poetry among the Ancients, which

which shall be hereafter prov'd to be sacred, had in it greater ordinary Passions, than their Human Poetry either had or could possibly have.

'Tis now our business to show that Religious subjects are capable of supplying us with more frequent and stronger Enthusiasms than the prophane. And in order to the clearing this, let us enquire what Poetical Enthusiasm is. Poetical Enthusiasm is a Passion guided by Judgment, whose cause is not comprehended by us. That it is a Passion is plain, because it moves. That the cause is not comprehended is self-evident. That it ought to be guided by Judgment is indubitable. For otherwise it would be Madness, and not Poetical Passion. But now let us enquire what the cause of Poetical Enthusiasm is, that has been hitherto not comprehended by us. That Enthusiasm moves, is plain to sense; why then it mov'd the Writer: But if it mov'd the Writer, it mov'd him while he was thinking. Now what can move a man while he is thinking, but the thoughts that are in his mind. In short, Enthusiasm as well as ordinary Passions, must proceed from the thought,

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thoughts, as the Passions of all reasonable creatures must certainly do; but the reason why we know not the causes of Enthusiastick as well as of ordinary Passions, is because we are not so us'd to them, and because they proceed from thoughts, that latently and unobserv'd by us, carry Passion along with them. Here it would be no hard matter to prove that most of our thoughts are naturally attended with some sort and some degree of Passion. And 'tis the expression of this Passion, which gives us so much pleasure, both in Conversation and in Human Authors. For I appeal to any man who is not altogether a Philosopher, whether he is not most pleas'd with Conversation and Books that are Spirited. Now how can this Spirit please him, but because it moves him, or what can move him but Passion? We never speak for so much as a minute together without different inflexions of voice. Now any one will find upon reflection, that these variations and those inflexions mark our different passions. But all this passes unregarded by us, by reason of long use, and the incredible celerity of our thoughts,

whose

whose motion is so swift, that it is even to our selves imperceptible ; unless we come to reflect, and every one will not be at the trouble of that. Now these passions, when they grow strong I call Enthusiastick motions, and the stronger they are the greater the Enthusiasm must be. If any one asks what sort of passions these are, that thus unknown to us flow from these thoughts ; to him I answer, that the same sort of passions flow from the thoughts, that would do from the things of which those thoughts are Ideas. As for example, if the thing that we think of is great, when then admiration attends the Idea of it ; and if it is very great amazement. If the thing is pleasing and delightful, why then Joy and Gayety flow from the Idea of it ; if it is sad, melancholy ; if 'tis mischievous and powerful, then the Imagination of it is attended with Terror ; And if 'tis both great and likely to do hurt and powerful, why then the thought of it is at once accompanied with Wonder, Terror and Astonishment. Add to all this, that the mind producing these thoughts, conceives by reflection a certain Pride, and Joy and Admiration, as
at

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at the conscious view of its own excellence. Now he who strictly examines the Enthusiasm that is to be met with in the greater Poetry, will find that it is nothing but the fore-mention'd passions, either simple or complicated, proceeding from the thoughts from which they naturally flow, as being the thoughts or Images of things that carry those passions along with them, as we shall shew by examples in the following Chapter.

But these passions that attend upon our thoughts are seldom so strong, as they are in those kind of thoughts which we call Images. For they being the very lively pictures of the things which they represent, set them, as it were, before our very eyes. But Images are never so admirably drawn, as when they are drawn in motion ; especially if the motion is violent. For the mind can never imagine violent motion, without being in a violent agitation it self ; and the Imagination being fir'd with that Agitation, sets the very things before our eyes ; and consequently makes us have the same passions that we should have from the things themselves. For the warmer the Imagination is, the more
pre-

present the things are to us, of which we draw the Images, and therefore when once the Imagination is so inflam'd as to get the better of the understanding, there is no difference between the Images and the things themselves; as we see, for example, in Fevers and Mad men.

Thus have we shewn that Enthusiasm flows from the thoughts, and consequently from the subject from which the thoughts proceed. For, as the Spirit in Poetry is to be proportion'd to the Thought, for otherwise it does not naturally flow from it, and consequently is not guided by Judgment; so the Thought is to be proportion'd to the Subject. Now no Subject is so capable of supplying us with thoughts, that necessarily produce these great and strong Enthusiasms, as a Religious Subject: For all which is great in Religion is most exalted and amazing, all that is joyful is transporting, all that is sad is dismal, and all that is terrible is astonishing.

C H A P. VII.

*The Causes of Poetical Enthusiasm,
shewn by Examples.*

THe Enthusiasm that is found in Poetry, is nothing but the fore-mentioned passions, Admiration, Joy, Terror, Astonishment, flowing from the thoughts which naturally produce them. For Admiration, together with that Pride which exalts the soul at the conceiving a great Hint, gives elevation; Joy, if 'tis great, gives transport, and astonishment gives vehemence. But now let us shew by examples, how this was done, and let us begin with that Admirable Ode of *Horace*, which is the third of the Third Book.

*Iustum & Tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava Jubentium,
Non vultus instantis Tyranni
Mente quatit solida, neque Auster
Dux Inquieti Turbidus Adriæ ;*

Nec

*Nec fulminantis magna Jovis manus,
Se fractus Illabatur Orbis
Impavidum ferient Ruinae.* That is,

The man, the brave man, who is resolv'd upon a right and a firm principle, is sure never to have his solid virtue shaken, neither by the rage of the giddy multitude, nor by the frowns of an insulting Tyrant, nor by the Fury of the Roaring South, that Turbulent Ruler of the Tempestuous Adria; no, nor by the Red Right Hand of Thundring Jove: Nay, should the World's disjointed Frame come rushing down with a Dismal Sound upon him, its Ruines might Crush, but they could never Shake him. Now 'tis plain that in the original there is a great deal of Enthusiasm. But let us observe a little what this Enthusiasm is. Upon observation we shall find then, that in the fore-mentioned Verses there is Elevation, Severity and Vehemence, and consequently there is something Admirable in them, and Terrible and Astonishing. Now why should we feel these passions in reading these thoughts, unless the passions naturally attend them, when they are express'd as

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they should be? But Admiration, as we have said above, must come from something that is great, and Terror from something that is powerful, and likely to hurt; and Astonishment from something that is very Terrible, and very likely to hurt; that is, from things that are so, or from their Idea's. The Reader, upon examining the fore-mention'd Verses, will find that the thoughts in them all are great and terrible, and some of them are astonishing.

But here I desire the Reader to observe three things: First, the admirable gradation of Thought here. How the Poet rises from something that is Terrible, to something that is more Terrible, till he comes at last to something Astonishing and Amazing. How from the Rage of the Mad Multitude, he proceeds to the frowns of a Tyrant that stands threatening by: How he rises from thence to a storm at Sea, and from thence to the wrath of *Jove* express'd in the dreadful Thunder, and from thence to the final dismal Dissolution of all things. The next thing that I desire him to observe is, How the Spirit of the Poet rises with his Thoughts, which

is

is a sure sign, that the one is nothing but the passions that attend on the other. And the third thing that the Reader is to remark is, that the Poet could not carry his Enthusiasm higher after the second thought, without having recourse to Religion. For he who knows any thing of the Pagan system, knows that the three last thoughts are taken from their Religion.

Let us now set before the Reader an Image, that only by its greatness will move him and exalt him. The passage is in the first Book of *Milton's Paradise Lost*, where he thus describes *Lucifer*.

He above the rest,
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a Tower, his form had yet not lost
All her original Brightness, nor appear'd
Less than Archangel ruin'd, and th' excess
Of Glory obscur'd, as when the Sun new risen
Looks thro' the Horizontal misty Air,
Shorn of his Beams, or from behind a Cloud
In dim Eclipse Disastrous Twilight sheds
On half the Nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes Monarchs; Darkned so yet shone
Above them all th' Archangel, but his Face
Deep Scars of Thunder had Intrench'd,

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I desire the Reader would give himself the trouble of comparing these ten lines, with the ten that preceded them, and then to tell me, why the Spirit should be so much greater in these than it is in the others ; unless it proceeded from the greatness of the Ideas, or how the greatness of the Ideas could cause it, but by infusing into the Poet admiration and a noble pride, which express'd make the Spirit, which is stately and majestic till the last, and then it grows vehement, because the Idea which causes it, is not only great, but very Terrible. For all the afflicting Passions that are violent are express'd with vehemence. The Reader cannot but observe of himself, that the greatest of these noble Ideas is taken from Religion.

*But his Face
Deep Scars of Thunder had Intrench'd.*

Now let us consider two very masterly Images, out of the Second Book of *Virgil* ; the first is the Hewing down of a Tree, which appear'd so admirable to *Julius Scaliger*, that he affirm'd that *Jupiter*

pter could never have mended it; and the second gave occasion for that Incomparable Statue of *Laocoon*, which I saw at *Rome*, in the Gardens of *Beluidere*, and which is so astonishing, that it does not appear to be the work of Art, but the miserable Creature himself, like *Niobe* benumm'd and petrify'd with grief and horror.

The first, besides its Greatness, carries Terror along with it. *Virgil* compares the Destruction of *Troy*, which had been ten years besieg'd, to the fall of a Mountain Ash, at whose Root the labouring Swains had been a long time hewing with their Axes.

*Ac veluti summis antiquam in montibus
ornum,
Cum ferro accisam, crebrisq; bipennibus
instant.
Eruere Agricola certatim, illa usq; mi-
natur.
Et Tremefacta Comam concusso vertice
nutat,
Vulneribus Donec Paulatim evicta, su-
premum
Congemuit, traxitq; Jugis avolsa ruinarum.*

And as when sturdy Swains, with frequent strokes,
 Hewing with all their stretcht out arms,
 let drive
 At the firm Root of some aspiring Oak,
 Which long the Glory of the Mountain
 stood,
 That ev'ry moment formidably nods,
 And shakes the lofty glories of its crown,
 Till broken by repeated wounds at last,
 Down it comes rushing with a fatal groan,
 And tears the Earth, and rends the solid Rock,
 And still is Dreadful in its hideous fall.

Now here I desire the Reader to consider, how the Poet raises his Spirit as soon as he sets his Image in motion, and brings in Terror to his relief.

*Illā usq; minatur,
 Et tremefacta comam, concusso vertice
 mutat.*

For all the passions, when they are very great, carry Fury along with them, and all the afflicting passions, together with Fury, carry Vehemence and Severity.

And

And the Poet hereby setting his Image in motion, had set it before his eyes, and so made it the more terrible. Let us now consider that of *Laocoon*.

*Laocoon Ductus Neptuno sorte Sacerdos,
Sollennes Taurum Ingentem mactabat ad
aras,*

*Ecce autem gemini, a Tenedo, Tranquil-
la per alta*

*(Horresco referens) Immensis Orbibus
Angues*

*Incumbunt pelago, pariterq; ad littera
tendunt :*

*Pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta, Jubaq;
Sanguineæ exuperant undas, pars cetera
Pontum*

*Pone legit, sinuantq; Immensa volumine
Terga,*

*Fit Sonitus, spumante salo, Jamq; arva
tenebant.*

*Ardentesq; Oculos Suffecti Sanguine &
igni,*

*Sibila Lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora:
Diffugimus visu exangues, illi agmine
certo*

*Laocoonta petunt, & primum parva Duorum
Corpora natorum Serpens anplexus uterq;*

Im-

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*Implicat, & miseros morſu Depaſcitur
artus,*

*Poſt Ipſum auxilio Subeuntem, ac Tela
ferentem*

*Corripiunt, ſpiriſq; ligant ingentibus, &
Jam*

*Bis medium amplexi, bis collo ſquamea
circum*

*Terga Dati, ſuperant capite & ceraicibus
altis.*

*Ille ſimul manibus tendit divellere nodos,
Perfuſus ſanie vitas atroq; veneno.*

*Clamores ſimul Horrendos ad Sydera tol-
lit.*

*Quales Mugitus, fugit cum ſaucius aram
Taurus & incertam excuſſit cervice ſeca-
rim.*

Which in *Engliſh* Blank Verſe runs thus,

Laocoon, now Great Neptune's Prieſt, by
Lot,

*The ſolemn Sacrifice a mighty Bull
Prepar'd to ſlay; when lo from Tenedos
Two huge Twin Serpents of prodigious ſize,
(A ſhivering horror chills all my life blood
At the bare thought and freezes ev'ry Nerve)
Their monſtrous folds incumbent on the
Main,*

With

*With equal haste come rowling tow'rd's the
Shore.*

*Their spotty Breasts erect above the Waves,
And bloody Crests, look fearful to the eye.
Their other parts come winding through the
flood*

*In many a waving spire ; the Sea resounds,
While with the Scaly horrors of their Tayls
They swinge the foaming brine.*

*And now they land, now dart their flaming
Eyes,
Distain'd with Blood, and streaming all
with fire.*

*We, pale and bloodless at the dismal sight,
All in a moment trembling disappear.*

*They to the Priest direct their flaming way,
And of his little Sons each seizing one,
Around their Limbs they twine their snaky
Spires,*

*And on their little trembling Joynts they
feed :*

*A dismal Feast ; and while their wretched
Sire*

*With piercing shrieks comes rushing to their
aid,*

*At him with Fury both at once they dart,
And clasping him with their vast pois'nous
folds,*

Twice

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Twice round his Waste they twist, and twice
 his Neck ;
And stretching o're his Head, their dismal
 Head
And lofty Crests, upon the dying wretch
They dreadfully look down : He all in vain
With all his might his brawny Muscles
 strains,
And stretches his extended arms, to tear
The pois'nous and inextricable folds,
And from their entrails squeezes horrid gore.
And now tormented, hideously he roars,
And stamping, stares from his distracted eyes.
Thus madly bounds about the impetuous Bull,
When from his wound he shakes th' uncer-
 tain Axe,
And Bellowing, from the Bloody Altar broke.

And now here we find a deal of En-
 thusiasm ; which is nothing but the ele-
 vation, and vehemence and fury pro-
 ceeding from the Great and Terrible and
 Horrible Ideas. For the Poet setting his
 Image in so much motion, and expretling
 it with so much action, his inflam'd
 Imagination set it before his very eyes,
 so that he participated of the Danger
 which he describ'd, was shaken by the
 Terror, and shiver'd with the Horror.
 And

And what is it but the expression of the passions he felt, that moves the Reader in such an extraordinary manner. But here let us observe how the Spirit of the Poet rises, as the Danger comes nearer, and the Terror grows upon him.

*Jamque aroa tenebint
Ardentesque oculos, &c.*

And now they land, &c.

Let us consider beside what prodigious force all this must have in the connexion, where Religion adds to the Terror, encreases the Astonishment, and augments the Horror. For 'twas by the direction of *Minerva* that this Terrible Incident was brought about, who had combin'd with *Juno* to destroy the *Trojans*, as has been at large declar'd in a former Critical Treatise. And thus we have endeavour'd to shew how the Enthusiasm proceeds from the thoughts, and consequently from the subject. But one thing we have omitted, that as thoughts produce the spirit, the spirit produces and makes the expression; which is known by experience to all who

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who are Poets; for never any one, while he was wrapt with Enthusiasm, wanted either Words or Harmony; and is self-evident to all who consider, that the Expression conveys and shows the Spirit, and therefore must be produced by it. So that from what we have said we may venture to lay down this Definition of Poetical Genius. Poetical Genius in a Poem is the true expressions of Ordinary or Enthusiastick Passion, proceeding from Ideas, to which it naturally belongs; and Poetical Genius in a Poet, is the power of expressing such Passion worthily: And the sublime is a great thought express'd with the Enthusiasm that belongs to it, which the Reader will find Agreeable to the Doctrine of *Cecilius*. *Longinus*, I must confess, has not told us what the sublime is; because *Cecilius*, it seems, had done that before him. Tho' methinks, it was a very great fault in so great a Man as *Longinus*, to write a Book which could not be understood, but by another Mans Writings; especially when he saw that those Writings were so very defective, that they were not likely to last. But tho' *Longinus*
does

does not directly tell us, what the Sublime is, yet in the first six or seven Chapters of his Book, he takes a great deal of pains to set before us, the effects which it produces in the minds of Men; as, for example, that it causes in them admiration and surprize; a noble Pride, and a noble Vigour, an invincible force transporting the Soul from its ordinary Situation, and a Transport, and a fullness of Joy mingled with Astonishment. These are the effects that *Longinus* tells us that the Sublime produces in the minds of men. Now I have endeavour'd to shew what it is in Poetry that works these effects. So that take the Cause and the Effects together, and you have the Sublime.

C H A P.

CHAP. VIII.

Recapitulation, and that the Subjects of the Ancients, in their greater Poetry, were Sacred.

WE have now shewn, that if the Ancients excel the Moderns in Epick Poetry, in Tragedy, and in the greater Ode, they derive not their pre-eminence from any external, nor from any internal advantage, abstracted from the nature of the subject, and that consequently they must draw it from the nature of the subject itself. Then we shew'd that the greatest difference between one subject and another is that of Sacred and Prophane. Then we shew'd that Passion was the chief thing in Poetry, and great Passion in great Poetry, and that either ordinary Passion or Enthusiasm. Then we shew'd that Sacred subjects were as susceptible of ordinary Passion, as the Prophane and more susceptible of the Enthusiastick, which
last

last we shew'd by Reason and by Example. So that to give a convincing Reason why the Ancients did, and must for the most part excel the Moderns in Epick Poetry in Tragedy, and the greater Ode, we have nothing to do, but to shew, that those Poems among the Ancients were always Sacred, because it is very well known, that among the Moderns, they are for the most part Prophane. First, then for Tragedy, that is very well known to have been Sacred in its institution, and it is full as plain, that it must have been Sacred in its original Nature, and after that the Episodes began to Intrench upon the Chorus, it still continued Sacred, as having Apostrophes, Revelations, Invocations, Machines. And so had the greater Ode. And as for Epick Poetry, in that the eldest of the Muses after the first Invocation was believed to Dictate every thing; besides, that the Gods were every where introduced in it, and all things were done by their Ministry. For which Reason it's apparent, that the Moderns in these sort of Poems, writing upon Prophane Subjects, cannot possibly equal the Ancients, sup-
E posing

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posing these last to have had but an equal
share of Genius with them.

CHAP. IX.

*That the Ancient Poets deriv'd their
preheminance from Religion,
shewn by several other things, and
first from this ; that they did not
excel the Moderns in Poetry, in
which they made no use of
Religion.*

THat the Ancients in the *Epos*, in
the Ode, and in Tragedy, deriv'd
their preheminance from Religion,
may appear from several things that
have not yet been mention'd, and first
of all from this, that they did not excel
the Moderns in Poetry, in which they
drew no advantage from Religion, as in
Comedy and in Satyr, and that in Histori-
cal Poetry, as the *Pharsalia* of *Lucan*,
whenever the Ancients excell'd the Mo-
derns, they drew their advantage from
Religion.

For

of Modern Poetry.

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For Comedy the Ancients are so far from excelling the Moderns in it, that the advantage is clearly on our side. For I shall make no scruple of preferring *Moliere*, and two or three of our own Comick Poets, to *Terence* and *Aristophanes*. For whether the design of Comedy, be to instruct or to please, or both, the Modern Comedy answers both those ends incomparably better than the Ancient. If the end of Comedy be only to please, why then it must please by the *Ridiculum*; for that which is the end of any sort of Writing whatever, must be attain'd by a way, that must distinguish that sort of Writing. As, for example, the end of Tragedy and of Epick Poetry is to instruct. But the latter instructs chiefly by Admiration, and the former by Compassion and Terror. Now Admiration distinguishes Heroick Poetry, and Compassion and Terror Tragedy, from all other sorts of Poems whatever; but the only thing that distinguishes the pleasure which Comedy gives us, from the pleasure that we receive from all other sorts of Poems whatever, is the *Ridiculum*. Now the *Ridiculum* in the Modern Comedy, is beyond Comparison Higher than it is in

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the new Comedy of the Ancients, and beyond Comparison more in Nature, than it is in the old one. And it is higher both in the Incidents, and in the Characters. For if the end of Comedy is to please, and that end is to be attain'd by the *Ridiculum*, why then the *Ridiculum* ought to be spread throughout it. But besides, that it is higher in the Modern Comedy, there is a greater variety of it both in the Incidents and in the Characters, and that variety must make it the more delightful. For a uniformity in this case takes away from the surprize, and without surprize the *Ridiculum* cannot subsist. And besides, that the Moderns have a greater variety both of Characters and Fables, they have a greater variety of Style. For the Style of the Comedy of the Ancients, and particularly of *Terence* his Comedy, does not seem to me to be varied enough, nor proportioned enough to the Characters. The Slave in *Terence* speaks with the same Elegance and the same Grace for the most part that his Master does. But look into the Plain Dealer, and you shall find as many Styles in it, as there are Characters. For *Manly*, *Freeman*, *Plausible*, *Olivia*, *Novel*, *Elisba*,

lisba, the Widow *Blackacre* and *Jerry* have each of them a different Dialect, which besides the variety, must be further delightful, because it is an exact Imitation of Nature. For as every man has a different form of face, he has a different turn of mind, and consequently a different cast of thought, and a different manner of expression. Add to this, that the Moderns seem to know men better, and to dive into some latent foibles, into some Ridiculous Recesses, that were utterly unknown to the Ancients. So that in every good Comedy, at the same time, that we are diverted with the *Ridiculum*, we are entertained with Discoveries, which is very delightful; But if the chief design of Comedy be to instruct, as I make no question but it is, because publick spectacles ought to contribute to the publick advantage, we shall find, that the Modern Comedy answers this end too better than that of the Antients. If the design of Comedy be to instruct, it must instruct by the *Ridiculum*, for the very same Reason, that we affirm'd it must please by it, because it is to be distinguished by the means, by which it attains its end. But nothing but the *Ridiculum* can distinguish

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Comedy from all other Poems. But Comedy instructing by the *Ridiculum*, that *Ridiculum* ought to be both in the Fables and Characters. First, it ought to be in the Characters, or else it cannot be in the Incidents, and consequently there can be no Comedy. For the manners of the Agents produce the Incidents. Secondly, it ought to be in the Incidents, or else it would follow, that there would be manners in the Agents, which are not productive of action, which ought not to be. Besides, Comedy instructs by its Fables or Characters, or both. If it instructs only by its Characters, as some Criticks have thought, yet the *Ridiculum* ought to be in the Action too, or the seriousness of the Incidents would check the instruction, as well as the pleasure, which we receive from the Characters. But if it instructs by its Fable and Action, as certainly it ought to do, why then the *Ridiculum* must be in the incidents which are parts of the Action, because Comedy instructs by the *Ridiculum*; and consequently this last ought to reign chiefly in the Catastrophe, which ought to be the most instructive part of the Fable, and
to

to make the strongest impression. Besides, there are but two ways of instructing by example, and those are, the shewing men Ridiculous for their faults, or unfortunate, to represent them expos'd by them, or chastis'd for them: But if Comedy shews men unfortunate, it usurps upon Tragedy. The great Disorders of the world are caus'd by great Passions, and they are punish'd by Tragedy. The little Passions cause little Disorders, and make us uneasie to our selves and one another, and they are expos'd by Comedy. For, that which we call Humour in Comedy, is nothing but a little Ridiculous passion, and the exposing it in Comedy is thought to be Poetical Justice sufficient for it: Not but that at last the Characters in Comedy may be chastiz'd at the Catastrophe for faults which they have committed; but that very Chastisement ought to be wrapt up in the *Ridiculum*, or the Catastrophe cannot be truly Comical. For as the Catastrophe of a Tragedy ought to be the most Tragical part of it, because Tragedy instructing by Compassion and Terror, those two Passions ought to be most strongly mov'd in the most Instructive part of the Fable; so the Cata-

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strophe of a Comedy ought to be the most Comical part of it for the very same reason ; for Comedy instructing by the *Ridiculum*, as has been shewn above, the most Instructive part of it ought to be most Ridiculous. But now if 'tis the end of Comedy to Instruct, and it instructs by the *Ridiculum*, the Modern Comedy must be more Instructive than the Ancient could be. For the *Ridiculum* in the old Comedy of the Ancients, was very often out of Nature, both in the Characters and in the Incidents, and consequently could not instruct. And the *Ridiculum* in their new Comedy being not so strong as it is in ours, neither in their Characters nor in their Incidents, could not instruct so powerfully ; and the Moderns having greater variety of it both in their persons and action, the instruction in the Modern Comedy must be the more extensive, besides that the variety of Action and Incidents must make our Catastrophes more surprizing, and consequently more Ridiculous.

So that the Modern Comedy pleasing more, and instructing more, and so answering the two ends of Comedy better than the Ancient did, it follows that
the

the Moderns in Comedy are preferable to the Ancients.

As the Moderns have excell'd the Ancients in Comedy, they have equall'd them in Satyr. There has been a long dispute among the Criticks, whether *Horace* or *Juvenal* ought to be preferr'd in Satyr. Their excellencies indeed are are very different, and therefore a Comparison is not easie to be made. *Horace* had a great deal of pleasantry, and *Juvenal* a great deal of force, at least for his way of writing. Now *Boileau* has justly got a great Reputation both for force and pleasantry, and consequently is equal to either of the *Roman* Satyrist; And here it will not be amiss to observe, that the very same Poets among the Moderns, who have surpass'd the Ancients in Comedy, and who have equall'd them in Satyr, have faln infinitely short of them when they have attempted the greater Poetry, as *Ben Johnson* comes behind them in Tragedy, and *Boileau* in the greater Ode.

As for Historical Poetry, any one who is acquainted with *Lucan* may have observ'd, that where that Author is very great, he derives his greatness from Religion; as he does, for example, in *Ca-*
to's

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to's Speech, which is a kind of Abstract
of the Religion and Metaphysics of the
Stoicks.

*Ille Deo plenus tacitâ quem mente gerebat,
Effudit Dignas Adytis e pectore voces.
Quid queri Labiene Jubes? An liber in armis
Occubuisse velim, potius quam Regna videres?
An sit vita nihil, sed longam differat etas?
An noceat vis ulla Bono? Fortunaq; perdat
Oppositâ virtute minas? Landandaque velle
Sit satis, & nunquam successus crescat Ho-
nestum.*

*Scimus, & hoc nobis non altius Inseret Ham-
mon*

*Heremus cuncti superis, Temploq; tacente
Nil facimus non sponte Dei: nec vocibus ullis
Numen eget, dixitq; semel nascentibus auctor
Quicquid scire Licet, steriles nec legit Arenas
Ut caneret paucis, merfitq; hoc pulvere verum
Estne Dei sedes, nisi Terra & pontus & aer
Et Cælum & virtus? Superos quid queri-
mus ultra?*

*Jupiter est quodcunq; vides, quo cunq; moveris
Sortilegis egeant Dutii, semperq; futuris
Casibus Anticipes, me non oracula certum
Sed mors certa facit, pavidio fortiq; cader-
dum est.*

Hoc satis est Dixisse Jovem.

Which

Which in English is thus.

Full of the Godhead in his Breast insbrin'd,
He in these words explains his mighty mind;
(Words which Oraculous Jove might dictate
to mankind.)

And what should I of these vain Priests en-
quire ?

If I had rather thus in Arms expire,
With these high thoughts, and this uncon-
quer'd fire,

Than live Ingloriously, to Hail a King,
And my great Soul to vile Subjection bring?
What should I ask ? if nothing be in Death,
And nothing in this Idle vapour Breath ?

If the Good only be supremely great,
Of Fortune Independant, and of Fate ?
If the Brave Patriot's, glorious in Distress,
And Tyrants, Despicable in Success ?

If in Magnanimous Attempts to fail,
Merits Renown as much as to prevail ?
This shou'd I ask ? all this I know, I feel,
And how shou'd Hammon Inborn Truths
Reveal ?

Why shou'd the Powers their Sacred wills
explain,
Since all we do, say, think, those Pow'rs
ordain,
Our wills are link'd to theirs by Fate's
eternal chain.

God

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God wants not man his meaning to convey,
But in one Breath said all that he can say,
In that Informing Breath which kindled
up our clay.

Nor would he build in barren sands his
seat,
That he to Fools ill Verses might repeat,
And hide eternal Truths in this obscure
retreat.

To Jove what certain seat can be consign'd?
Where can the Worlds great Ruler be con
fin'd?

This universal frame's the seat of that
eternal mind.

Why should we seek him in this Mystick
Grove?

Where-ever eye can reach, where-ever
thought can rove,

Substance and Space is all unbounded Jove.

Let those who live in Doubt (a foolish state)

Consult these mighty confidents of Fate,
Her Irreversible Decrees my constancy create.

Alike the Coward and the Brave must fall;

This mighty Jove has once declar'd for all,
And these inspiring sounds to Roman
actions call.

Lucan is very far from being so exalt-
ed every where as he is here. For,
where-

where-ever he is very great and poetical, he must be so by the greatness of ordinary passion, or by the force of Enthusiasm. But ordinary passions can neither be very frequent in an Historical Poem ; nor if they could, could they be frequently great. Because there being no Fable, and no Art, they can seldom be rightly prepar'd. Nor can the Enthusiasms be frequently great where there is no Religion. But Religion cannot be frequent in an Historical Poem, unless it is in Sacred History. If any one would give himself the trouble of comparing the Twelfth Book of the *Æneis* with the seventh of the *Pharsalia*, he would find that *Virgil* is ten times greater than *Lucan*, and that *Lucan's* subject, as far as it is Humane, is ten times greater than *Virgil's*. For, I hope, no man will compare *Æneas*, take him without his Divine Dependencies with *Julius Cæsar*, the greatest of men, nor the Combat that made the former King of the *Latins*, with the Battel that made *Cæsar* the Absolute Master of the World. From whence it would follow, if the greatness of *Virgil's* Subject consists in any thing Humane, that either *Lucan's* writing in his Seventh Book is twenty times

times below his Subject, or that the Writing of *Virgil* in his Twelfth Book is twenty times above his. But *Lucan's* writing in his Seventh Book is not twenty times below his Subject, as any Modern Poet that should be oblig'd to handle that Subject after him, would be forc'd to confess. Nor is the writing of *Virgil* in the last of the *Æneis* so many degrees above his subject. For if it is, then that last Book is scurvily writ, because the thoughts and expressions ought to be proportion'd to the things. But the last Book of the *Æneis* is admirably writ. What then can be the meaning of all this? Why the meaning must be, that *Virgil's* subject is twenty times greater than *Lucan's*. But *Lucan's* subject is ten times greater than his as far as it is only Humane, which has been made to appear. The excellency then of *Virgil's* subject must come from something that is not Humane, and that must be from Religion; so *Virgil's* greatness and his Enthusiasm comes from his Machines, and the Ministry of the Gods, and the other parts of his Religion, and *Lucan's* littleness, from his want of those Machines, and that Ministry. *Petronius*

Arbiter, *Lucan's* Contemporary, was very sensible of this. For he, tho an Epicurean profess, was so sensible of the Advantage that Poetry deriv'd from Religion, that in the Beginning of his *Satyricon*, after he has been exclaiming against the Writers of the Times, and particularly against *Lucan*, he offers this expedient for the restoring Poetry to its former greatness, that they should restore it to its former Religion. But to return to *Lucan*; He is often tedious and spiritless, because his Subject is not only meerly Humane, but it's sometimes Impious. For *Lucan* had conceiv'd the most extravagant Design in the World. For at the same time that he sets up for a Stoick, he writes a Book to prove either that there is no such thing as Providence in the World, or that the Gods favour'd Injustice.

Vidrix Causa Deis placuit sed videt Catoni.

Before I make an end of this Chapter, I beg the Reader's leave that I may digress for a moment, because the digression is of very great importance to Poetry.

We

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We have shewn that the Subject of *Virgil* in the Twelfth of his *Æneis*, is very much greater than *Lucan's* is in the Seventh of his *Pharsalia*. We have shewn too, at the same time, that *Lucan's* was greater as He found it, and that *Virgil's* was greater as He made it. For I hope I need say nothing at this time of day to prove that the Religious part of *Virgil's* Subject was Invented and Dispos'd by the Poet, Which may show the benefit of Art, that is, of Rules in Poetry. For, 'tis by the Genius of a Writer, that is, by a Soul that has the power of expressing great Passions, whether ordinary or Enthusiastick, that we treat a Subject with Dignity equal to its greatness, yet 'tis Art that makes a Subject very great, and consequently gives occasion for a great Genius to shew it self.

And thus we have shewn that the Ancients did not excel the Moderns in Comedy and Satyr, which are not Sacred Poems, as having neither Invocations, Apostrophes, Revelations or Machines; at least the new Comedy had none of all these, and the old one only some low Burlesque or else Grotesque ones. We have shewn too that the Sacred Poetry
of

of the Ancients, was beyond comparison greater than their Historical Poetry, because it was not Sacred.

CHAP. X.

That in their Sacred Poetry, in which the Ancients, excell'd the Moderns, those places were greatest, and most Poetical that had most of Religion.

BUT as the Ancients did not surpass the Moderns in Poetry that was not Sacred, so in that sort of Poetry where they did excel them, they were never so admirable as where they were most Religious. Now the passages of the Ancient Poets, which seem to have most Religion in them, are either those addresses by which men approach'd the Gods, as Invocations, Apostrophes, and the like ; or those condescensions, by which the Gods communicated themselves to men, as Revelations, Machines,

F

Etc.

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Ec. the first of which are Duties that belong to universal Natural Religion, the second to Religion which is Reveal'd, Extraordinary and Miraculous. Every thing that is great in Poetry must be great by the Genius that is felt in it, which is the chief thing in Poetry, according to the general acceptance of it; and the principal thing in the *Materia Poetica*, or the Body of Poetry. Now all Genius is Passion because it moves, and all Passion is either Enthusiasm or ordinary Passion, as we declar'd above. Now that even ordinary Passion in Poetry is heighten'd by Religion, we shall endeavour to prove. And we shall most insist upon those ordinary Passions, which are most to be found in Tragedy and in Epick Poetry. For, as for the greater Ode, that seems to be the peculiar province of Enthusiasm, and ordinary Passions in that are more rarely to be met with.

First then Admiration, which is the Reigning Passion in Epick Poetry, I mean that which is admirable in the action of the Hero, is heighten'd by Revelations, by Machines, and the Ministration of the Gods. For that Ministration,

stration, those Machines, and those Revelations are all Miraculous. And the man who was admirable before for his extraordinary Valour and his Native Greatness, becomes more wonderful, when we behold him the esteem and immediate concern of Heaven, when we see him the peculiar care of Providence, when we find the order of Nature inverted, the Skies grown factious upon his account, and Gods descending to sustain or oppose him.

But Secondly, Terror and Compassion, which are the Reigning Passions in Tragedy are Heighten'd by Religion. Tragedy, says *Aristotle* in his Poetick, is the Imitation of an action which excites Compassion and Terror. Now those two Passions proceed from Surprise, when the Incidents spring one from another against our expectation. For those Incidents, continues the Philosopher, are always more admirable than those which arrive by chance; which is evident from this, says he, that even of accidental things, those are always the most wonderful and most surprizing, which at the same time that

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they arrive by Chance, seem to fall out by Design ; and by a certain particular secret conduct, of which Nature was what they relate of the Statue of *Mitys* at *Argos*, which fell upon his Murderer, and kill'd him upon the spot, in the midst of a great Assembly. For that by no means, says the Philosopher, seems to be the work of Chance. From whence it follows, says he, of necessity, that those Fables where there is this conduct, will always seem preferable to those that have it not. Thus *Aristotle* declares that the Wonderful in Tragedy, as well as in Epick Poetry, is Heightned by Religion, that those Tragical Incidents that appear to have most of Providence in them, are always most moving and Terrible. The Reason is plain. For all our Passions are grounded upon the Love of our selves ; and Terror and Compassion spring from the Calamities of our equals ; that is, of those who being in circumstances resembling ours, and committing faults which we either commit, or to which we are liable, are upon that unfortunate. For the more there appears to be of Providence in the punishment, the more we pity the persons.

sons. For if their calamities appear to be the work of Chance, they might as well have hapned to those who have not committed such faults, as to those who have. And therefore a Train of Incidents, which, contrary to our expectation, surprizingly produce one another, is necessary, because the more plainly the punishment appears the result of the faults, and the more clearly we are convinc'd of this when we least expect it, Providence appears the more in the case, and our security is shaken the more, and the more we are mov'd and Terrified. But Religion does not only heighten those Passions which are great in themselves, as Admiration and Terror are ; for Admiration raises the Soul, and every thing that is Terrible, is certainly great to him to whom it is Terrible, but it ennobles those which are commonly base and dejected ; as for example, Grief ; witness that passage in the Passion of *Dido* :

*Testatur moritura Deos, & conscia Fati
Sydera.*

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And that Noble Apostrophe afterwards :

Sol qui Terrarem flammis, &c.

And that Sublime Apostrophe of Seimon
in the Second Book :

*Ille Dolis instructus & arte pelasgâ
Sustulit exutas vinclis, ad Sydera palmas,
Vos eterni ignes & non violabile vestrum
Numen ait, vos aræ ensesq; nefandi
Quos fugi, vitteq; Deum quas Hostia
gessi, &c.*

But to come to the other sort of Passion, which gives Poetry its force and its greatness, Religious Enthusiasm must necessarily be greater than Human Enthusiasm can be, because the Passions that attend on Religious Ideas, when a man is capable of Reflecting on them as he should do, are stronger than those which attend on Prophane Ideas, as has been said above, and has been partly shewn by examples. And as ordinary Passion is Heightned by Religion, so Human Enthusiastick Passions are heightned

ned by Religious Enthusiasm. We shall give an example of this in Terror, by which I mean not that Common Passion which *Aristotle* treats of in his Rhetoric and in his Poetick, and of which we spoke in the former part of this Chapter ; but that Enthusiastick Terror, which springs from the Ideas unknown to him who feels it. *Virgil* in his first Book of the *Æneis* describes a Tempest, which carries Double Terror along with it ; the ordinary one, which springs from the concern which we have for the Hero ; and the Enthusiastick one, which the Ideas would carry along with them, tho they were separated from that concern which we feel for the Hero. The Description is Grave, and Severe, and Exalted, because the Poet was mov'd by the Terrible Ideas. For that which is Terrible, is always great to him to whom it is Terrible, as we said before ; and that which is Great is Admirable, and then he who is Terrified is always serious, and very much in Earnest. The same Description where the Terror is at the Height is vehement.

*Insequitur cumulo præruptus aquæ Mons,
Hi summo in fluctu pendent, his unda De-
hisceus*

Terram inter fluctus aperit, furit æstus arenis.

Because that which is very Terrible is Wonderful and Astonishing, and he who is astonish'd, being transported beyond himself, must of necessity express himself with that sort of Fury which we call Vehemence. *Virgil*, by setting so many Terrible Images in motion, had set this Tempest before his Eyes, or rather had transported himself as it were into it. Now, any one who has been upon the brink of a Wreck, and consequently has been very much Terrify'd himself, and seen others Astonish'd, cannot but have felt the same motions that he feels in Reading this passage, and cannot but have observ'd that others who felt them, express'd themselves with the same Fury and Vehemence that the Poet does, tho not with the same Elegance. But tho this Storm is Terrible in it self and Wonderful, yet the Machines, which prepare, and raise, and allay it, very much add to its Great-
ness

ness and genuine Terror, and it is quite another thing when it is consider'd with the cause of it, which is the Anger of *Juno*, and the Compliance of *Æolus*, and with that which follow'd upon it, which is the Indignation of *Neptune*, and the exertion of his absolute power.

The passages of the Ancient Poets that were most Religious, were their Invocations, Apostrophes, or the like ; or those which contain'd the Miraculous part of their Religion, their Signs, Apparitions, Oracles, and other Revelations.

For their Invocations, Apostrophes, and the like, which were all of them either a sort of Prayers, or Divine Attestations, they are most of them very sublime, and attended with a strong Enthusiasm. And how could it be otherwise, but that the Ancient Poets, who were men of great Learning, of great Passions, great Eloquence, and great Parts ; when with study and pains, and with all their endeavours to be Enthusiastick, they address'd themselves to their Gods, should be extremely agitated, when we see very plainly that a sort of Modern Enthusiasts, who have neither
Learn-

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Learning nor Parts, nor the least tincture of good Letters, are even in their Extempore Prayers disturb'd with very fierce Enthusiasms.

For the Apostrophe, we have given examples of it already, and therefore we shall only say here, that *Longinus* mentions it as one of the Figures that contribute the most to the Sublime. For the Invocation, we shall bring an Example of it, from the seventh Book of *Virgil*, and the Reader is desir'd to take notice what addition of Enthusiasm attends it.

*Nunc age, qui reges, Erato, quæ tempora
rerum.*

*Quis Latio antiquo fuerit status, advena
classem*

Cum primum Ausoniis exercitus appulit oris.

Expediam, & primæ revocabo exordia pugnae.

Tu natem, tu diva mone, dicam horrida bella:

Dicam acies, actosque animis in funera reges,

Tyrrhenamque manum, totamque sub arma

coactam

Hesperiam, major rerum mihi nascitur ordo:

Majus opus mo

And

And from Horace, Lib. 3. Ode 4.

*Descende cælo, & dic age tibia
Regina longam Calliope Melos,
Seu voce nunc mavis acuta,
Seu fidibus citharave Phæbi :
Auditis ? an me ludit Amabilis
Insania ? andire & videor pios
Errare per lucos, amænæ
Quos & aqua subeunt & aura.*

But to come to those passages of the Ancient Poems, in which the Miraculous part of their Religion was contain'd, and their Revelation more nearly concern'd, as their Signs and Wonders, and their private Inspirations ; but above all, the Apparitions of their Gods and their Oracles, it is no wonder if those passages, speaking of things that strike mankind with the last Astonishment, have almost all the Enthusiasm of which the mind of man is with Reason capable. *Horace* is by no means a cold Writer, and yet he is far from writing every where with the same degree of Fury, and the same Rapture, that he does in the beginning of the Nineteenth Ode of the Second Book. *Bac-*

*Baccham in remotis carmina rupibus
 Vidi docentem, (credite posteris)
 Nymphasq; discentes, & aures
 Capripedum Satyrorum acutas.
 Evæ, recenti mens trepidat metu,
 Plenoq; Bacchi pectore turbidum
 Latatur, Evæ, parce Liber,
 Parce, gravi metuende thyrsos.*

Nor is *Virgil* every where so Enthusi-
 astick, as he is in the beginning of the
 Sixth Book, where the *Cumean Sibyl*
 rages with the *Delphick God*.

*Ventum erat ad limen, cum virgo, poscere
 sata
 Tempus ait, Deus, ecce Deus cui talia fami
 Ante fores subito, non vultus non color unus
 Non comæ mansere comæ, sed pectus anhe-
 lum
 Et Rabie fera corda tument, majorq; videri,
 Nec mortale sonans, afflata est numine
 quando
 Jam propiore Dei.*

*The Hero now the Sacred Floor approach'd,
 When on a sudden the Prophetick Maid,
 This is the Fearful Time t' enquire of Fate;
 And*

*And said it with a voice and with a look,
That now were hers no more.*

*For raving, Lo the God, the God, she cries,
While half disclosing her distorted Face,
Her Tresses in a wild disorder stare.*

*And now she pants, she swells, she foams
with Rage,*

*And now her Shape looks hideous to the eye,
And now she Thunders in a dreadful Tone,
While all the Godhead raging in her Breast,
With his tempestuous Spirit shakes her soul.*

In short, any thing that immediately concerns Revelation has so great an Influence upon Poetry, that it is able to change even the Nature of Writing, and Exalt that very sort of Poetry, which by its Character is Low and Humble; as for Example, the Eclogue: The fourth Eclogue of *Virgil* will be easily granted by all to be very Sublime. But what is it that makes it so? Why there is at once in that Eclogue an Invocation, and an Apostrophe, and a Revelation of sundry Miracles to come. The Fifth Eclogue between *Menalcas* and *Mopsus*, begins with all the Humility, and all the Simplicity, that is proper and peculiar to the Eclogue.

Men.

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Men. *Cur non Mopse, boni quoniam convenimus Ambo,*

*Tu Calamos in flare Leves, ego Diecre
versus.*

*Hic corilis mixtas inter consedimus ul-
mos?*

And thus Mr Duke has with the same
Simplicity translated it.

Men. Mopsus, *Since Chance does us toge-
ther bring,*

*And you so well can Pipe, and I can Sing,
Why sit we not beneath this secret shade,
By Elms and Hazels mingling Branches
made?*

But this very Menalcas changes his
Tone in a wonderful manner, when in
the same Eclogue he comes to the Apo-
theosis of Daphnis:

*Candidus insueti miratur limen Olympi
Sub pedibusq; videt Nubes & Sydera
Daphnis.*

And you may easily see that the Gen-
tleman who translated it, who wants no
Ge-

Genius, felt the extream alteration of
the Spirit.

Daphnis now wondring at the Glorious
show,
Ore Heavens bright Pavement does Tri-
umphant go,
And sees the moving Clouds, and the fixt
Stars below.

But let us see a little how Virgil goes
on.

Ergo Alacris Sylvas, & cætera rura vo-
luptas

Panaq; pastoresq; tenet, Dryadasq; puellas,
Nec Lupus Insidias pecori, nec Retia cervis
Ulla Dolum meditantur, amat bonus otia
Daphnis.

Therefore new Joys make glad the Woods,
the Plains,

Pan and the Dryades, and the chearful
Swains,

The Wolf no Ambush for the Flock does
lay,

No cheating Nets the harmless Deer be-
tray,

Daphnis a General Peace Commands, and
Nature does obey.

But

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But *Virgil* goes on.

*Ipsi Letitia voces ad Sydera Jactant
Intonsi montes, ipsæ jam carmina Rupes
Ipsa sonant Arbusta, Deus, Deus Ille Menalca.*

Sis bonus o felixq; tuis !

*Hark ! the glad Mountains raise to Heav'n
their voice,*

*Hark ! the hard Rocks in mystick tunes
rejoyce !*

*Hark ! thro the Thickets, wondrous Songs
resound,-*

*A God, a God, Menalcas, he is crown'd,
O be propitious ! O be good to thine !*

But now 'tis time to ask a question,
What is the reason that *Virgil*, who
knew the Character of the Eclogue bet-
ter than any man, and who was so
thoroughly convinc'd that the Discourses
of Shepherds ought to be simple, and
their affections soft and gentle affecti-
ons, and who besides has been always
us'd to introduce his persons speaking
perfectly in their Characters, should
bring in *Menalcas* in this Eclogue talk-
ing in so exalted a manner, and with so
strong

strong an Enthusiasm? Why he has given the Reason in the preceding Verses.

*Ipsæ jam carmina Rupes
Ipsa sonant Arbusta, Deus, Deus Ille Me-
nalca.*

'Tis that he was satisfied that very violent Enthusiasms flow so necessarily from the wonders of Religion, that they were as natural to Shepherds as they were to Kings, as being to both alike unavoidable. But what Influence the Miraculous part of Religion had on the Ancient Poetry, we shall discover more at large in the following Chapter.

CHAP. X.

*That the Grecian Poetry flourish'd
with their Religion.*

THe Grecian Religion flourish'd in Greece from the time of *Orpheus*, who was either the Original Instituter,
G or

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or at least a vehement propogater of that Idolatry, till the Age after that in which *Sophocles* flourish'd, that is, for the space of about eight hundred years, and in that space of time flourish'd all their Poets, who are celebrated for their excellence in that sort of Poetry which we call Sacred. Which alone is a strong presumption, that these Poets deriv'd their excellence from Religion. In short, the advantage which their Poetry drew from Religion must needs be very considerable, when for all or most of the fore-mention'd space of time, according to the Testimony of *Plutarch*, and several others of their authentick Writers, it made most of their Zealots, even their common people Poets, and that even in their ordinary conversation. I must confess, the Gentleman who writ the History of Oracles, treats this as a Fiction, and a Fiction so palpable as not to be worth the answering. But perhaps that Gentleman had not consider'd this matter enough. For I desire the Reader to consider two things. First, the extraordinary incentives which those people had to Enthusiasm, which is one qualification for Poetry; and secondly, the
the

the habit which they might very probably contract of Versification. To be satisfied of the first, let us enquire a little into the nature of their Religion: And upon enquiry we shall find, that the very source, and spring and soul of it was an imaginary or pretended Revelation, and that that Revelation was suppos'd to be constant and continual, as it must be of every Religion which has no sound Morality. They had their publick and private Revelations, as Oracles, Visions, Dreams, Apparitions. And Gods and Goddeses, Nymphs and Demi-gods, Fawns and Satyrs were seen by Imagination in every Grove, on every Mountain, and in every Valley, as soon as either the Horrors of the place, or its silence, or their fears, or their wishes, or their contemplations had dispos'd their minds to be Religiously impos'd upon. Now what sort of Passions, and what sort of Spirit must be produc'd in them by these Imaginations, we may guess by what happens among our selves, when any one believes that he has seen an Apparition. The man is alter'd quite in a moment; his colour, his mein, his comportment are all different: Nor are

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they who hear him the same, but are all of them surpriz'd, transported, astonish'd, and all of them very profoundly attentive. Now very few that have any Judgment have any Notion that an Apparition will do them any harm, nor has any one an example of it, that may be easily credited. But the *Ancient Grecians had notions, that their Gods had power to destroy them, or make them happy, and they had a thousand Examples of it, in *Musens*, and *Orpheus* and *Homer*, and the rest of the Fathers of their Church, which must cause the Emotions upon the fancied Apparitions, or the Relations of them to be the greater, and fill their Souls with more turbulent Passions, and a greater Religious Horror.

But then let us consider, secondly, that these Zealots must in some measure have contracted a Habit of Versification from their Religious duties. For the very common People in *Greece*, had with quick apprehensions a great deal of vivacity; and therefore I leave the Reader to guess, what effect the Reading *Musens*, and *Homer* and *Orpheus*, and the rest of the Fathers of their Church, for

for their whole life-time, must necessarily have had upon their Minds; together with their Praying, Praising, Sacrificing and Thanksgiving in Verse: Why, may not they very well be supposed from all this, to have contracted a Habit of Versifying?

And why may not that Habit, joyn'd to their continual Enthusiastick Motions, which they had, either from the Revelations which they fancied that the Gods imparted to themselves, or from the Relations of those, which they believed were vouchsafed to others; or from the performance of the foresaid Religious Duties, and from their Ritual, which their Poets had compos'd with so much Enthusiasm, capacitate them to express, themselves Poetically even in common Society; as well as some whole Sects of our Modern Fanaticks in *England*, who have by no means the vivacity of the *Grecians*, are enabled from the continual Reading of Scripture, and the Imaginary Dictates of the private Spirit, to make up their ordinary conversation almost wholly of Scripture language.

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But since these Visions and these Apparitions, joyn'd to their constant Reading the Poets, had such a mighty influence upon the people, what must they not have had upon their Priests the Poets, who having stronger pretences to those Revelations, and more earnest and eager application to the Reading of the Poets, who writ before them, and who besides having strong Imaginations and great Passions, and still greater Souls to command them, were qualify'd to draw an extraordinary advantage from them? When these, whose peculiar business it was to take care of Religion, at any time writ upon Religious Matters, what Gravity, what Severity, what Elevation, what Vehemence must they not necessarily derive from their subject?

C H A P.

C H A P. XII.

Objection answered.

BUT here 'tis convenient to answer an Objection; for here it will be urg'd, that the Ancient Poets among the *Grecians*, being men of extraordinary parts, could not believe any thing so absurd as the Revelations and Miracles mention'd in the former Chapter, and consequently could not draw any advantage from them. To which I answer, that first they might draw an advantage from them tho they did not believe them; and secondly, that they did believe them.

First, Supposing they did not believe them, yet they might very well draw their advantage from them. For every one is brought up in the Reveal'd Religion of his Country, and consequently believes it for the first part of his life. Now every one knows that the force of

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Education, and the Influence of first Impressions is great, and especially upon the minds of those who have strong Imaginations. And supposing that the Poets, when they set themselves to write, were not satisfied about the Truth of the Revelations of which they treated, yet the former strong Enthusiastick motions, that they were wont to have upon the like Ideas in the first years of their youth, would certainly follow upon them again, whenever they had heartily a mind to give into them.

But secondly, a man may have a very good understanding, and yet believe a false, nay, even an absurd Revelation. The Revelation of *Mahomet* is both false and absurd, and yet several among the *Turks*, who have shewn themselves men of extraordinary parts for several years together; have at last convinc'd the world of the sincerity of their belief, by very frankly submitting to die at the Command of their Emperors, when they could with a great deal of ease have declin'd it. For 'tis so reasonable to believe that there should be such a thing as Revelation, of which we shall speak more at large anon; and all Revelati-

ons

ons are so little to be comprehended by us, that a man even of a good understanding will be oblig'd to believe an absurd one rather than none. Besides, the Ancient *Grecian* Poets knew no other Religion than the *Grecian* Revelation. For they had neither any clear Idea of one Supreme Independent Being, nor any tolerable knowledge of the Law of Nature. For all the great Poets among the *Grecians* flourish'd before the Doctrine of *Socrates* was establish'd in the world, and before that establishment they had neither any certain knowledge of the True God, nor any tolerable notion of the Law of Nature. For had there been that, there would have been a system of Morality; but *Socrates* was the first who introduc'd Moral Philosophy into that part of the world.

And here the Mythologists may pretend as long as they please, that the Ancient *Grecian* Poets, by the number of their false Gods, meant only the different notions of the true. 'Tis plain they had no clear and distinct Idea of one Supreme and Infinite Being: For either the Knowledge of the True God must be drawn from Reason or Revelation

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tion: From Revelation they could not draw it, because their own Revelation was not true: And if they had the knowledge of the true God from any other Revelation, of which perhaps some of them might have heard imperfectly, why then that knowledge was imperfect, and could consequently not be clear: And to deduce that knowledge from Reason a man must use a great deal of attention and a great deal of application. But in those times the Corruption of the *Grecians* was too great, and their Passions were too strong, and the Exercise of Reason was too little known among them, to use either the attention or the application. But besides all this, there is something in the Ancient *Grecian* Poets that is repugnant to the Divine Nature, as is known to every one who has been conversant with them, and that alone renders all the Conjectures of the Mythologists Ridiculous.

And lastly, we have a great deal of Reason to be convinc'd that the Ancient *Grecian* Poets, I mean their Sacred Poets, did believe the Revelations they treated of, because as their Poetry flourish'd

ish'd with their Revelation, so at last it fail'd with it, as we shall shew at large in the following Chapter.

C H A P. XIII.

That the greater Poetry among the Grecians fail'd with their Religion.

AS Epick Poetry, Tragedy, and the Greater Ode, flourish'd with Religion among the Ancient *Grecians*, so together with Religion they fail'd. Now in order to the proving this, let us enquire how and when the *Grecian* Religion fail'd. We have said in one of the former Chapters, that the very spring and soul of that Religion was a constant continual Revelation, as it must necessarily have been of such a Religion as had no Morality. The *Grecians* worshipp'd many Gods, but before they worshipp'd them, they must believe that they were, and that they wanted neither power nor will to make them either happy

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py or miserable. Now of these two things they were convinc'd by Imaginary or pretended Revelations, as by Oracles, Visions, Dreams, Apparitions, and a thousand Fantastick Miracles. Now as long as these were in credit in *Greece* Polytheism went on Triumphantly. For they who had neither any insight into the True Religion, nor any tolerable habit of Reasoning, could never argue against matter of Fact as long as they made no doubt of the Truth of it. But as soon as the matter of fact came to be suspected, the *Grecian* Worship was undermin'd and weaken'd very considerably. To be convinc'd of this, we need only consider the Design of that Revelation, and the methods of carrying it on, and we shall find that that very Design, and those very Methods, made a certain way for its ruine. We have said above that no Religion which wants Morality can outlast its Revelation. For if Morality is not for it, it will be against it. And 'tis impossible to conceive how any Religion can be permanent, which has neither Miracles nor Human Reason to support it. Now it will be an easie matter to shew two things, first, that
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the *Grecian* Religion was without Morality ; and secondly, that the very Design of it, and the Methods of carrying on that Design, introduc'd Moral Philosophy, by a very natural preparation.

The Design of the *Grecian* Religion, seems to me to be the providing for the Happiness of Mankind in this life, by drawing them out of a state of War, and making them live peaceably and securely among one another.

*Sylvestres Homines, Sacer Interpresq; Deorum
Cadibus & victu fædo deterruit Orpheus.*

Says *Horace*, in his little Treatise *De Arte Poetica*. That is :

*Orpheus, the Sacred Interpreter of the
Gods, deterr'd savage men from Mur-
dering one another, and reclaim'd them
from the Barbarous Brutal lives which
they led.*

Now this Design he was to bring about by Religion, and Revealing the pretended will of the Gods. In order to which it was necessary to give the people
such

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such a Religion as might be agreeable to them in the condition in which they were. For otherwise they would not have hearken'd to it. Now, to give them a Religion that might be agreeable to them, it was necessary to give them such a one as might Maintain and Indulge their Passions. For, when the *Grecian* Worship was first instituted, the corruption of that people was so very great, that tho the Instituter had known the pure Law of Nature, he durst never have preach'd it to them, because their Passions were then too strong to receive it. Well, then *Orpheus*, or *Linus*, or whoever was the first Instituter of the *Grecian* Religion, was oblig'd to Maintain and Indulge the Passions, which I am apt to believe that he had no notion of suppressing, because he believ'd them all to be natural, and saw by experience that some of them contributed to the Pleasure and Happiness of Mankind. The Instituter then of the *Grecian* Worship was oblig'd to Maintain the Passions; but here lay the difficulty. The very crimes that kept men asunder, and in a state of War, were caus'd by some of those very Passions; what then was

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to be done in this case? Why, He was oblig'd to give those Passions a diversion, and to Indulge and Maintain the rest in the same condition in which he found them. As for example, Rage and Fury were the principal passions that maintain'd men in a state of War, and occasion'd the frequent Murders that were daily committed among them. Now these passions being grown up with them, and by consequence become habitual to them, it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to suppress them. The first Instituter then of the *Grecian* Religion thought fit to give those passions a vent a less cruel way, and for that purpose in all likelihood instituted the *Orgies* of *Bacchus*. But the passions that were not utterly inconsistent with Society, he indulg'd in the condition in which he found them, as the Love of Women, Wine, &c. For, all that the Founder of that Religion could pretend to at first, was to bring men out of a greater confusion into a less, and not to reduce them to perfect order. Therefore, by shewing the Gods addicted to these passions, he encourag'd the people to cherish them, nay,
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to such an Intemperance as was repugnant to the original Law of Nature, nay, even to such a criminal degree, as was afterwards forbidden by the Laws of the *Grecian* States. For Intemperance in the use of Wine and of Women is contrary to the Dictates of Natures original Law, and yet was encourag'd by the Examples of some of their Gods, and Rapes and Adulteries and Incest were encourag'd by the same Examples at first, without any manner of Counter-check. For, either the System of the *Grecian* Theology was contriv'd at first without any Infernal Punishments, or they were only threaten'd to such crimes as were contradictory of civil Society. But afterwards, as Confusion lessen'd, and Order increas'd, and other Crimes were found to be more repugnant to Community, and so were forbidden by the Laws, the Magistrates in all likelihood oblig'd the succeeding Poets to threaten those who dar'd to commit them, with the punishments of another World, and so to make up the Infernal Scheme by Degrees. Thus have I endeavour'd to shew by the most probable Conjectures I could make, what was the
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original Design of *Orpheus*, and what method he took to compass it. But this is past all doubt, that the original Revelation of the *Grecian* Worship was Repugnant in several points to the primitive Law of Nature, and the succeeding Laws of the *Grecian* States. Now the method which *Orpheus*, or whoever was the first founder of the *Grecian* Religion, had taken, was maintain'd by succeeding Poets, only here and there, as occasion serv'd, they intermingled precepts of Justice and Temperance ; which precepts are by no means to be look'd upon as parts of that Revelation, but as Remnants of Natural Religion and of the Law of Nature, which the Passions had not been able totally to suppress ; or the efforts and strugglings of Reason, recovering from its Lethargy by Degrees. But the Poets and Law-givers could not give good precepts with a great deal of good success, as long as the Gods were believ'd to give ill examples. For the people look'd upon their Laws, unless they were inforc'd by Religion, as made only for the conveniency of life, and transgress'd them whenever they could

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with

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with Impunity ; and the precepts scatter'd up and down in the Poems were but Impotent Imperfect efforts of Reason, and utterly unable to prevail against a continual constant Revelation, and a train of perpetual Miracles.

But now let us consider how this Design of *Orpheus*, or whoever was the first Instituter of the *Grecian* Religion, let us see how his Design in setting up his Theology, together with the Methods that were us'd for carrying it on by him and succeeding Poets, secretly prepar'd the way for its utter ruine. For the bringing men in a body together, and causing them more frequently to converse with one another, was the first occasion of the cultivating Humane Reason, and was consequently one preparation to the Introduction of Moral Philosophy.

And the Laws that were made by their Legislators, and the Precepts that were given by their Priests and Poets, in consequence of mens convening and conversing together, had been sensible encroachments upon the Revelation, as being manifest contradictions of it, if men had been us'd to reflect. At last,
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after Miracles and Revelations had prevailed for the space of almost eight hundred years, *Socrates* arose a most extraordinary man, who finding that the Precepts that had been scattered here and there, for the Regulation of Humane Life, and the Laws that had been given for the maintaining of Order in Communities, were all contradictory of the Revelation, but all agreeing perfectly with one another in the promoting of the same Design, which was the welfare of those who observ'd them, he had reason to enquire a little more narrowly into the Revelation, and to find that that was contradictory too of it self. For the Celestial and the Infernal Schemes of the Ancient *Grecian* Theology, seem'd so utterly inconsistent, that, as I hinted before, they could never be conceiv'd to be both given ou't at a time; but it was reasonable to believe, that first the Celestial Scheme was invented, and afterwards the Infernal made up by degrees, in order to the serving the ends of Government. For not only the Infernal Deities rigorously punish'd those very Crimes, which the Celestial Gods had by their Examples encourag'd men to

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commit : but which is very odd to consider, their Hell seem'd to be fill'd with their Good Gods, and their Heaven with Devils. For whether we consider *Plato* or *Proserpine*, or the Judges, or the Fates, or the Furies, these were all of them very rigorous, and if you please inexorable ; but then they were all of them very just, and foes and inexorable only to guilt, and never any of them did any harm to Virtue. But at the same time that the Magistracy of Hell was compos'd of these honest upright Persons, Heaven on the other side was fill'd with all sorts of Scoundrels, Rakes, Cuckolds, Bullies, Pimps and Bawds, and Cuckold makers; and no Virtue, and no Innocence could secure either Men or Women, from these Immortal Scow-rers. Nay, men often suffer'd for their Temperance, and women for their Chastity. *Socrates* then considering the absurdity of the Revelation, and the Reasonableness of the Laws and Precepts that were distinct from it : The agreement of the latter among themselves, and the inconsistency of the former, cultivated the one, and condemn'd the other, and by the force of a strong and clear Reason
and'

and a long conversation with all sorts of people, brought the Exercise and Habit of reasoning into Request, and by little and little introduced a system of Morality, restor'd in some measure Natural Religion, and recover'd the Law of Nature. Thus *Socrates* gave the world a System of Morality, and tho his Contemporaries had not reason enough to make the discovery themselves, yet they had sense enough to approve of it when it was made, and to be convinc'd of the Truth of it, and consequently to be satisfy'd that the Revelation was false. For seeing that Virtue, and Order and Happiness, I mean in some degree, sprung from Philosophy, and Vice and Confusion and Misery from the Revelation; and seeing the Philosophy was establish'd by Inferences, which very naturally flow'd from these Intelligent Faculties, which, whatever power had form'd man, had given him to be his guide; and seeing the Philosophy and the Revelation contradictory one of another, they could not find in their hearts to believe that the Gods could be so unjust as to design the misery and confusion of Mankind, or so absurd as to give them two

rules to walk by, that were contradictory one of another.

The establishment then of Moral Philosophy, was the ruine of the old Revelation, and so made way for a new. For after the death of *Socrates*, there started up several Sects of Philosophers, as the *Cyrenaicks*, *Cynicks*, *Peripateticks*, *Epicureans*, *Scepticks*, some of them immediately, but all within a hundred and fifty years, who were all of them mortal Enemies, not only to the *Grecian* Revelation, but to Reveald Religion in general: Tho in the last they certainly went beyond the design of their common Master *Socrates*, whose intention was to reform Revelation, and not to ruin it. And thus upon the establishment of Moral Philosophy, the credit of Oracles was diminish'd considerably, and Apparitions, Visions, &c. were condemn'd and exploded, and with them down went the greater Poetry: for you will find upon enquiry, that there was no Poet among the *Grecians*, who was born after the death of *Socrates*, who writ with a great Spirit.

C H A P. XIV.

*That the Greater Poetry among the
Romans flourish'd and fail'd
with their Religion.*

That the *Grecians* deriv'd their pre-
heminence in the greater Poetry
from Religion, may appear not only
because they flourish'd and decay'd toge-
ther, but because the *Romans*, whose
Country was not like *Greece*, the Scene
of perpetual Miracles, and who for a
long time had no correspondence with
Greece, had no such thing as the Spirit of
Poetry among them, till they came to
Conquer that Country.

*Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit & artes,
Insulit Agresti Latîo.*

For there was something in the Instituti-
on of the *Roman* Religion, as it was esta-
blish'd by *Numa Pamphilus*, that lessen'd
the credit of Divine Apparitions conside-

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Plut. *Life*
of Numa.

bly. 'Tis true, *Numa* founded his Sacred Establishment upon the Authority of Apparitions ; but at the same time that he profess'd a familiarity with the Goddess *Ægeria*, and with the Muses, he taught the people, that no resemblance of the Gods could be made, nor any likeness to represent them. The first was a Fiction to serve a turn in Politicks, and the latter a Truth that was contradictory of the other. And he had need have very gross people to deal with, that could swallow such a contradiction as that : For if no Form or Likeness of the Gods could be made, in what Likeness could they appear to him, or how could he distinguish *Ægeria* from the Muses, or the Muses from one another ? I am apt to believe that *Numa* ventur'd this contradiction upon the grossness of the people with whom he had to deal, because the Truth and Fiction were equally necessary to his Ecclesiastical Policy. For as his Authority was grounded upon the Fiction, so it was strengthen'd by the Truth ; for the appearing of the Immortal Powers to *Numa* had not made him so venerable, if such Apparitions had been common to every

every one. However, this contradiction was swallowed by the People, and *Numa* upon it, gain'd both his Points ; for he was held to be a Sacred Person, and the Gods were esteem'd invisible. So that for a hundred and sixty years, says *Plutarch*, in the Life of *Numa*, there was no such thing as a Statue in their Temples, nor any talk of the Gods appearing to them. For how could those numerous Gods, whom they worshipp'd, with any possibility appear to them, since they could make no likeness of them. At length, the Superstition of the *Grecian* Idolatry by degrees encreas'd upon them ; and having conquer'd *Greece* and *Carthage*, and so got an insight into the Arts, and leisure at once to cultivate them, the *Grecian* Religion, and the *Grecian* Arts grew up together among them ; and of all the Arts Poetry was the first that was cultivated, because it was incorporated with their Religion. So that there appears to me to be this considerable difference between the greater Poetry of the *Grecians*, and that which was among the *Romans*, that the *Grecians* deriv'd their Poetick Enthusiasm from the Miracles of their Religion, and

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and the *Romans* borrow'd theirs in some measure from the *Grecians*.

*Spiritus Graiae tenuem Camenae
Parca non mendax dedit, &c.*

Hor. lib. 2. Ode 16.

So that the latter appears to me to be but a Copy as it were of the former. For, in effect, the *Romans* copied the *Grecian* Spirit: For we have shown from *Horace* the best of the *Roman* Criticks, that the *Romans* had no such thing among them till they had conquer'd *Greece*, nor had they any such frequent Impulses to Enthusiasm, and having the same Revelation at the time that they cultivated Poetry, that the *Grecians* had, they could hardly say any thing of their Gods or their Demi-Gods, or their Fabulous Transformations, that the *Grecian* Poets had not said before them. Besides, the most famous of the *Roman* Poets copied particular *Grecian* Authors, as *Horace* did *Pindar*, and consequently fell short of them in the freeness and flame of their Spirit, as Copies must necessarily do of Originals. And as for the Tragedies that were among the Ro-

mans,

mans, the best of them were directly translated from the *Athenian* Poets.

Since then the *Roman* Poets copied the *Grecian* Spirit, what is the reason that the *Romans* copied them so much better than we do? Why, first, they understood them better, and were more familiar with them, because then the *Grecian* was a living language, and *Rome* had a continual correspondence with *Athens*. Secondly, they had a more beautiful and more harmonious language to receive that Spirit; and lastly and chiefly, that Religion from which it was deriv'd made greater impressions upon them than it does upon us. And in order to the making that appear, we shall show that Poetry among the *Romans* flourish'd and fail'd with Religion.

Poetry began to be cultivated at *Rome* after the Conquest of *Greece*, and the end of the *Thid Punick War*.

*Servus enim Græcis admovit acumina chartis
Et post punica belli quietus, quærere cepit
Quid Sophocles & Thespis & Æschylus
atque ferrent.*

Now

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Now nothing is more reasonable than to believe that the *Grecian* Superstition, from which the Spirit of their Poetry was deriv'd, was at a greater height at *Rome*, after the *Romans* had conquer'd the *Grecians*, than it could be before they had a continual correspondence with that people. But besides, Religion in the main may be thought to be in a very great esteem among the *Romans* about the time that they began to cultivate Poetry.

In order to the proving which, let us enquire what was the fountain and source of Religion among the *Romans*, and upon what it chiefly depended. The chief support of Religion among the *Grecians* was the constant Revelation by Oracles; but the *Italian* Oracles were more rare, and of much less renown. The prop and support of the *Roman* Superstition lay in their Divinations, as *Machiavel* in his Discourses observes. For, says *Machiavel*, they easily believ'd that that Divinity that foretold their felicity had the power to effect it. *Machiavel* had reason to be of that opinion. For, how could their Gods be thought certainly to foretell what it was

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not in their power certainly to effect? And thus did the *Roman* Worship depend in a very peculiar manner upon the credit of their Divinations. But now let us enquire in what credit the Divinations were when Poetry began to be cultivated; which, as we observ'd above, was after the third *Punick* War.

Now the credit of the Augurs and the Aruspices must needs at that time be very great with the *Romans*. For, since good Fortune alone inclines men to Devotion, and to confide in the Gods, as *Aristotle* has observ'd in the Second Book of his Rhetorick; what thoughts must not the *Romans* have of their Soothsaying, when they were not only arriv'd at such a Degree of Felicity, but believ'd that they ow'd all their greatness to the predictions of their Augurs. For they consulted them upon every important conjuncture, and particularly before they gave Battel. 'Tis true, they had sometimes fail'd, but where they had fail'd once, they had succeeded ten times; which is evident from the felicity of that Commonwealth. Now, if one lucky guess can support our ordinary Fortune-tellers, who are wretched contemptible

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bonds, against a hundred that happen unfortunate, as we know by experience it does, in what height of Reputation must not the Soothsayers be, whose Order it self was held to be Sacred and August, when they had apparently succeeded ten times for their failing once. The *Romans* were now become the greatest people upon the Earth, and the Promise of *Romulus* reveal'd to *Proculus*, according to the Oath of the latter, that *Rome* should be the Mistress of Nations ; that promise, which at first seem'd so very incredible, was now very likely to be accomplish'd. And the *Romans* believ'd that they had been conducted by the predictions of those Diviners, as it were by so many steps, to that height of Glory, at which they were in Triumph arriv'd, and from the which they had a certain prospect of becoming Masters of the Universe.

Divination then being in very great credit in the age in which Poetry began to be cultivated, Religion, which had its chief dependance upon it, must consequently needs be in very great credit too, which was the thing that we design'd to prove.

But

But from what has been said it necessarily follows, that any one that should have brought Divination into disgrace, must have given a terrible shock to the superstition of the *Romans*. Now, about a hundred and threescore years after Poetry began to be cultivated, being introduc'd by *Livius Andronicus*, there flourish'd a great Wit, who not only baffled the whole Mystery of Divination in a learned Philosophical Treatise, but also publish'd an extraordinary Book concerning the Nature of the Gods, which alone, says Mr *Harrington*, in his preliminaries to his *Oceana*, was sufficient to overthrow the Religion of the *Roman* State. Thus *Cicero* contriv'd and effected himself the very Crime, for which he declaim'd against *Cataline* with so much vehemence, and undermin'd the most solid foundations of the Temples of the *Roman* Gods.

About the same time the *Athenian* Philosophers began to establish themselves at *Rome*. The *Jews*, whose Country *Pompey* had subdu'd, began every day to resort more and more to the World's Capitol. The *Romans*, thro an excess of ridiculous flattery, deify'd their decess'd
Empe-

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Emperors, which alone was enough to make the *Roman* Religion ridiculous; and Jesus Christ came into the world to introduce a new Revelation. What was the effect of all this upon the *Roman* Religion? A Superstition that had made such impressions on the minds of that people, and from which they imagin'd that they and their *Ancestors* had receiv'd so much benefit, could not be utterly overthrown in a moment. The *Romans* were so very pertinacious in their Principles, and had so much flegm and constancy in their constitutions, that the *Grecian* Philosophy, and the Doctrine of *Cicero*, requir'd some time to prevail. However, prevail they did; and with them the Christian Religion got ground, and the Pagan declin'd; and the Superstition and Poetry of the *Romans* gradually declin'd together. And the Declension of the *Roman* Poetry was attributed even by *Petronius* himself, who was a thorough-pac'd Epicurean, to the neglect of the old Theology.

*Per Ambages Deorumque Ministeria
Precipitandus est liber Spiritus.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

*Objections answer'd. Conclusion of
the former part of the Work.*

BUT here it concerns us to answer some Objections, which we easily foresee may be made. For if the Religion which the *Romans* borrow'd from the *Greeks* had so great an influence on their Poetry, and the two Treatises which *Cicero* writ concerning Divination and the Nature of the Gods, gave such a shock to that Superstition; How comes it to pass that Poetry not only flourish'd afterwards, but came to perfection in *Horace* and *Virgil*, which two were the greatest of the *Roman* Poets. In answer to which we shall endeavour to show as succinctly as we can, why Poetry flourish'd after the publication of those Treatises, and why it afterwards came to perfection. To satisfy the Reader why Poetry flourish'd afterwards, we need only repeat what we observ'd
I above,

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above, that the flegm and solidity of the *Roman* people, and perhaps their Politicks, suspended the effect of thole Writings, and of the Doctrine of the *Grecian* Philosophers; and when they began to spread, it is reasonable to believe that they went downwards from the *Patricians* and the *Roman* Knights to the people, who in all probability were the last who were undeceiv'd. Now the greatest of their Poets, and especially *Virgil* and *Horace*, flourish'd within less than fifty years after the publication of those Treaties, and were most of them very meanly descended. So that they were brought up in the Religion of their Country, and had consequently when they came to write, the advantage of first Impressions, and their copying the *Grecian* Poetry, threw them upon the old Idea's. 'Tis true, some few of them were better descended, and were *Roman* Knights, but either they were too much Men of Pleasure, to dive into Philosophy, or too much Poets, to espouse a Sect that would not favour Enthusiasm.

But now let us enquire with the same brevity, for what reason Poetry, that derives

rives its preheminance from Religion, came to perfection among the *Romans*, after these attacks had been given to the Religion of that State: In answer to which, we must put the Reader in mind, that there are three things which contribute to the perfection of Poetry. The first is Nature, which is the foundation and basis of all. For Nature is the same thing with Genius, and Genius and Passion are all one. For Passion in a Poem is Genius, and the power of exciting Passion is Genius in a Poet; to the raising of which, Religion, as we have shewn above, gives a very great Advantage. The second thing is Art, by which I mean those Rules, and that Method, which capacitate us to manage every thing with the utmost dexterity, that may contribute to the Raising of Passion. The third thing is the Instrument by which the Poet makes his Imitation, or the Language in which he writes. By Language I do not mean here the expression of any particular Poem, or the poetical Dialect which the Poet models himself; but the language of the Country in which he writes, and which he finds made to his

I 2 hands.

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hands. These are the three things that contribute to the perfection of Poetry; so that in any Age or Country, at whatever juncture Religion and Language and Poetical Art are in greatest force together, at that very juncture the Poetry of that Country is at its height. And this is the reason why Tragedy, which is a Poem of the growth of *Attica*, was at its height in the time of *Sophocles*, because then the Language was in perfection; the Art of Poetry, and particularly of Tragedy, had been extremely cultivated, and Religion as yet had power enough o're the minds of men to inforce the passions. But the greatest of these three is Religion, and the most prevalent towards the advancement of Poetry, as is plainly seen by the event. For, after that the Introduction of Moral Philosophy had ruin'd the establish'd Religion among the *Greeks*, Tragedy immediately lost its force, tho' the language remain'd in perfection afterwards, and the Poetical Art was perhaps improv'd. Let us now examine how the Art of Poetry, and the *Roman* Language and the *Roman* Religion stood in the time of *Augustus*. The Art of Poetry,

Poetry, which had been introduc'd by *Livius Andronicus*, had now been cultivated for about two hundred years, but with a great deal of Interruption, caus'd by the violences of those times; and that it was at its utmost height in the time of *Augustus*, we have no great reason to doubt, because we find more of the Poetical Art in the single *Æneis* of *Virgil*, than in all the rest of the *Roman* Poets together. For the Language, that it was then at its height, is agreed on by most; and tho some few may contend that it was somewhat declin'd from the purity which it had in the preceding age, yet it was certainly more Poetical in the time of *Augustus*, that is, more full, more sounding, more significant, and more harmonious. And as for Religion, we have already shewn that the effect of the Writings of *Cicero* was suspended by the flegmatick temper which was incapable of sudden Impressions, and perhaps by the politicks of the *Romans*. But that was not all. Religion had then more Force, more Authority and more Majesty, than it had had for some time before; and that by the example of the Emperor. No one can be

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ignorant what influence the example of a Prince has upon the minds of the people. Now *Augustus* was in his temper Religious even to Superstition. And tho during the violences of the Triumvirate, his Politicks had got the better of Nature in him, yet as soon as he had attain'd the Sovereign Power, Policy and Nature were reconcil'd, and both of them favour'd Religion; whereas the Age preceding had been an Age of continual Violences, and consequently not of so much Religion. The *Roman* Senate having got the Lands from the People had consequently got the Dominion, so that that famous Commonwealth was dwindled into an Oligarchy, and that Oligarchy was grown factious, as all Oligarchies must of necessity do; and the heads of those Factions were all of them labouring who should overthrow the State; so that they who were at the Helm of the State, neither were nor could appear good, because there was a necessity of their giving pernicious Examples. *Augustus* himself, notwithstanding his natural clemency, and his proneness to Superstition, was drawn in by Ambition to the committing all man-

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ner of violences in the beginning of the Triumvirate, and neither did nor durst appear what he was, till dividing the World between himself and *Anthony*, Policy and Nature were reconcil'd in him, and he was oblig'd to appear rather more Debonaire and Religious than he was by his Natural Temper, that the Extravagancies of *Anthony* appearing more hideous, compar'd with the Beauty of his Character, he might insensibly undermine his Rival in the esteem of the Senate and the *Roman* people, and alone command the Universe; and we may judge by this, what influence the Example of the Emperor had upon the Writers, that it not only prevail'd upon *Virgil* to make Piety one of the chief Ingredients in the Character of his Hero; who was design'd by the Poet the very Picture of *Augustus Caesar*, but engag'd him to incorporate so much Religion with the Action of his Poem, that it is the most Religious Epick Poem that ever was writ in the World.

And thus we have endeavour'd to shew as briefly as we could, that Art and Language and Religion were all of them in a great deal of force together in the glorious

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Reign of *Augustus*, and much more powerfully united than ever they had been before, and I hope I need not tell the Reader than ever they were in the Reigns of succeeding Emperors. And in shewing that, I have given the reasons why the *Roman* Poetry was then at its utmost height, tho I make no doubt but that a settled calm and a full tranquility, after a fierce and a tedious Tempest; and the elevation that might spring from the Remains and the Appearances of Liberty, and consequently the appearances of their being Masters of the Universe; and lastly, the never to be forgotten bounty of a magnanimous Prince, and the Emulation that must ensue upon it among so many extraordinary men, might all of them contribute to the advancement of Poetry.

But if the Writings that flourish'd among the *Romans*, and especially in the time of *Augustus*, receiv'd such advantage from the *Roman* Religion, that the excellence and greatness of their Poetry is chiefly owing to that, how comes it that *Virgil* is found in his Writings to have had so exalted a notion of God, as is utterly inconsistent with the *Grecian*

cian Theology? How comes it to pass, that *Lucretius* and *Horace* are held to be thorough-pac'd *Epicureans*, on whom the Superstition that reign'd among their Country-men could have no manner of influence, and yet *Horace* allow'd to be after *Virgil* the greatest of the Roman Poets, and *Lucretius*, as *Tasso* is pleas'd to call him, a most Noble Versifier.

'Tis true indeed, *Virgil* had an exalted notion of God, as we may see by several places in his works,

*Ab Jove principium Musæ, Jovis omnia
plena.*

And that famous passage in the fourth *Georgick*,

*Deum namque Ire per omnes
Terrasque Tractusque Maris Cælumque pro-
fundum.*

And that in the sixth *Æneid*,

*Principio Cælum ac Terras camposque li-
quentes,
Lucentemque Globum Lunæ Titanniaq; astra
Spi-*

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*Spiritus Intus alit, totosq; infusa per Artus
Mens agitat molem & magna se corpore
miscet.*

Now this exalted notion of *Jupiter*, or the Supreme Being, *Virgil* had from the Writings of *Plato*; and the rest of the Gods and Goddesses a little modified, as they are in that Poet, in whom we see none of *Homer's* Religious extravagancies are exactly the *Platonick* Dæmons. So that *Virgil* strictly adhering to the *Platonick* Sect, it follows that his Philosophy did very little harm to his Religion.

But to proceed to *Horace*. He was so very far from being a thorough-pac'd *Epicurean*, as some will obstinately have him, that he was of every Sect by turns, and chang'd his Philosophy and his Religion with his Humour, as a great many do besides him; and when that Humour inclin'd him to Libertinism, then he was an *Epicurean*; and whenever it turn'd about to Austerity, then he became a *Stoick*. That there are a great many such persons in the world, we may take the word of the Duke De *la Rochefant*.

Now

Nous ne nous apercevons que des Emportemens et Des mouvemens extraordinaires. De nos Humeurs, et de notre Temperament, comme De la violence De la colere, mais personne quasi, ne s'aperçoit, que ces Humeurs ont un cours ordinaire, et Regle, qui ment et tourne Doucement et imperceptiblement notre volonte a des actions differentes, elles roulent ensemble s'il faut ainsi Dire, et exercent successivement un Empire secret en nous memes, De sorts qu'elles ont un part considerable en toutes nos actions, sans que nous le puissions reconnoitre.
That is,

We are sensible of nothing that passes within us, but the extravagant extraordinary motions of our Complexions and Humours. But hardly a man has made this discovery, that those Humours have a constant regular Course, which moves and insensibly inclines our wills to a great many different actions. They run rowling together, if I may use the expression, and exercise a secret sway within us, so that they have a considerable share in our actions, while we are utterly unable to discern it.

Now

Now that *Horace* was as likely to be by-
ass'd by his humour, as any other per-
son whatsoever, we have his own word
Epist. 8. lib. 1.

*Si quæret quid agam : dic multa & pulchra
minantem,*

*Vivere nec recte, nec suaviter, haud quia
grando*

*Contuderit vites, oleamq; momorderit æstus :
Nec quia longinquis armentum ægrotet in
arvis :*

*Sed quia mente minus validus quam cor-
pore toto,*

*Nil audire velim, nil discere, quod levet
ægrum :*

Fidis offender medicis, irascar amicis,

Cur me funesto properent arcere veterno:

*Quæ nocuere sequar, fugiam quæ perfore
credam :*

*Romæ Tybur amem ventosus, Tibure Ro-
mam.*

So that, as we observ'd above, when
this humour inclin'd him to Libertinism,
then he was an *Epicurean*, and when
the alteration of that humour enclin'd
him to severity, then he became a *Stoick*

or a *Platonick*, of which we have a notorious instance in the 34th Ode of the first Book.

Parcus Deorum Cultor & infrequens, &c.

'Tis true, Monsieur *Dacier* treats this as Raillery, but it must be fine Raillery that could never be found out to be Raillery, till above sixteen hundred years after it was writ. *Horace* has left enough behind him, to shew that he understood Raillery a great deal better than that comes to. But what will he say then to that remarkable passage of the first Epistle of the first Book.

*Ac ne forte roges, quo me duce, quo lare
tuter*

*Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,
Quo me cunque rapit tempestas, deferor
hospes :*

*Nunc agilis fio, & versor civilibus undis,
Virtutis veræ custos rigidusq; satelles,
Nunc in Aristippi furtim præcepta relabor.*

But tho we should grant that *Horace* was always an *Epicurean*, yet that would make rather for than against us. For it
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is certain that he was educated in the Religion of his Country, as we observ'd above, and we know that the force of first impressions is great, and the copying the Spirit of the *Grecian* Poetry threw him upon those first Ideas.

*Spiritum Graiae Tenuem Cimentæ,
Parca non mendax dedit.*

And then this very *Horace*, whom some of the Moderns will so obstinately maintain to be a constant *Epicurean*; this very person, who, as he was the second of the *Roman* Poets, was one of their greatest Criticks, declares himself absolutely of our opinion, *viz.* that the *Roman* Poetry deriv'd its preheminance from the *Roman* Religion; for in his Satyrs, wherein he assures us he is no Poet, he intermingles none but Burlesque Religion, and that very rarely, with his Verses; in his Odes, where he knew that he was a Poet, Religion is every where seen, and Invocations, Apostrophes, Machines and Revelations abound in them.

But now a word or two to *Lucretius*.
He writ before the publication of *Cicero's*
Trea-

Treatises, but then he was undeniably an *Epicurean*, and writ with a design to draw others over to his Sect. But in that very Poem, which he writ with a Design to overthrow Religion, he shews of what importance Religion was to Poetry; and the very Treatise which he begins with a Design to overturn the Worship of the Gods, that very Treatise he begins with the Invocation of a Goddess. And that Invocation is undeniably one of the noblest and most Poetical parts of his Book: So that *Lucretius*, to attain an excellence in Poetry, was contented to be guilty of a very strange absurdity in Philosophy. For, to what purpose does he Invoke the Goddess of Love? Why he Invokes her to inform him that he ought not to Invoke her, for that she does not hear him, and does not regard him, and has nothing at all to do with him.

*Omnis enim Divum per se natura necesse est
Immortali ævo summa cum pace fruatur,
Semota a nostris Rebus sejunctaq; longe.*

For, let no one tell me here, that by *Venus* the Poet means only the generative

tive Faculty of things. In short, *Lucretius* Invokes something, and Invocation is Adoration, and whatever is ador'd, must during the action by the Adorer be esteem'd a Deity.

But it is not only in his Invocation that *Lucretius* is pleas'd to have recourse to Religion. For after that, in the two first Books he has been taking a great deal of pains to destroy the belief of Gods and Providence, that in his third he may be very Poetical and very Sublime, he is forc'd to erect a new Divinity in the room of those whom he has been just subverting; And that is Nature; tho by what he makes her say in that Noble *Prosopopæia*, we might very well mistake her for Providence.

So that we have not only the opinion of *Lucretius* on our side, but the example too. For, by having recourse to Religion in that very Philosophy that utterly disclaims it, he not only declares of what Importance he thinks it to be to Poetry, but has shewn of what Importance it really is, by succeeding so much better in those passages than in the other parts of his Book. But how could a Materialist, the Reader may say, draw

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any advantage from Religion? But *Lucretius* was made, not born a Materialist. He was bred in the Religion of his Country, and so had the advantage of, first impressions which are never to be defac'd, *Lucretius*, you may say, perhaps was very lofty and very Poetical where he had nothing to do with Religion. Indeed sometimes he was so, for I do not remember that I affirmed that there can be no Poetry without Religion, but only that Religion gives the occasion for the best, the greatest and the most Exalted, and it makes for my purpose sufficiently, that *Lucretius* is most Poetical and and Sublime where he is Religious. But where he is lofty in other places, we find him describing the great *Phænomena* of Nature, and the higher a man rises and the nearer he comes to the first infinite cause, the nearer he certainly comes to Religion. Besides, where *Lucretius* is lofty and Poetical in Describing the great *Phænomena* of Nature, there we are sure to find him astonish'd for from whence comes his vehemence but from his astonishment, which may give us a Suspicion, that *Lucretius* was not so very assured of the

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truth of his opinion. For effects astonish no man. He who is astonish'd is moved by the secret causes of things which are too high or too deep for his comprehension. So that in places where there is no mention of Religion, *Lucretius* in some measure derives from that his Impetuous Golden Torrent of Verse, his vehemence and his Sublimity.

And thus I have inquired into the merits of the Ancients, with all imaginable Impartiality, and have attempted to shew that they had the advantage of the Moderns in the greatness of Poetry, but that they deriv'd it not from any Superiority of Faculties, or any external or internal advantage, abstracted from the nature of the subjects of which they treated, but only from incorporating Poetry with Religion.

The End of the first Part.

THE

THE
ADVANCEMENT
AND
REFORMATION
OF
Modern Poetry.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

That the Design of the True Religion and Poetry are the same.

IN the former part of this Treatise we attempted to shew, that the Ancient *Grecians* and *Romans* excell'd the Moderns in the greatness of Poetry, and

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so endeavour'd to oblige a very considerable party of Mankind ; who admire the Ancient Poets to that degree, that they despair of their being ever equall'd, much less surpass'd by the Moderns ; but then, that we might disoblige as little as we could another body of men, who have a high opinion of the Moderns, and are apt to think them upon an equal foot with the Ancients, we endeavour'd to prove that the Ancients deriv'd their preheminance, not so much from any real superiority that they had in themselves, as from the Subjects of which they treated ; which Subjects were Sacred, either in their own nature, or by their manner of handling them. So that we have taken the most effectual course that we could possibly do, to remove the despair of one party, without too much exalting them, and to check the unreasonable presumption of the other, without too much depressing them ; that so the one party might despond no more, and the other be secure and careless no longer ; but that the Passions and Prejudices being removed, which have hitherto obstructed the Advancement of a Noble Art, and both

both Parties being reconcil'd and united in the common opinion, that the Ancients, tho they are exalted above us, are not beyond our reach, may immediately take fire, and contending with a Noble Emulation, push on the Art to some degrees of perfection, beyond what it has attain'd for these last fifteen hundred years. For, in the remaining part of this Treatise, we shall make it our business to convince the Reader, with all the brevity that the Importance of the affair will admit of, that the Moderns, by joyning Poetry with the true Religion, will have much the advantage of the Ancients in the main, tho they may fall short of them in some particular Poems.

But here it concerns us to answer an Objection. For perhaps the Reader may say, how can you maintain that the Christian Religion will be such a help to Poetry, when you have already in a former Treatise, made use of the Authority of *Boileau*, to shew that Christianity and Poetry were things that were inconsistent.

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*De la Foy D'un Chretien les Myfteres ter-
ribles*

*D'ornemens Egayez ne font point suscep-
tibles,*

*L'Evangele al'Espritn'offre De tous cotez
Que Penetence e faire, ou tourmens meritez.
Et de vos fictions le Melange Coupable
Meme a ses verites donne l'air de la fable.*

That is,

*The terrible Myſteries of the Chriſtian
Faith are not capable of delightful Orna-
ments ; that the Goſpel offers nothing
to our view, but Repentance on the one
ſide, and Eternal Torments on the other,
and that the Criminal mixture of Poetical
Fictions, gave a fabulous air even to its
moſt Sacred Truths.*

To which we answer ; that we only
made uſe of this paſſage in the fore-
mention'd Treatiſe, to ſhew, that the
Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion were
not to be mix'd with Fiction, and con-
ſequently that it would be a hard matter
to contrive *Machines* for an Epick Po-
em, upon a Modern Chriſtian ſubject ;
and

and if *Boileau* means any thing more by the fore-mention'd passage, I shall endeavour to show that he is mistaken, and that there may not only be most exalted Poetry upon a Christian subject, without Machines and without Fiction, but that the true Religion is more favourable to Poetry than Paganism, or Philosophy or Deism; and I shall first enquire into the Reason of things, and afterwards see how it is supported by Matter of Fact.

First, I shall enquire into the Reason of the thing, and I make no doubt but to make it appear, that the nearer Poetry comes to Perfection, the more agreeable it is to the design of the true Religion, and that consequently Poetry is much more noble and more instructive, and more beneficial to Mankind than either History or Philosophy.

In order to the doing which, let us examine what the design is of the true Religion, and we shall find that not only the design of Poetry is the very same, but the very methods of attaining that design the same, as far as they can be humanely prosecuted; tho' at the same time it must be confess'd, that Poetry, tho'

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the noblest of all Arts, and preferable either to History or Philosophy, falls as short of the Excellence of the true Religion, as Human Invention does of Divine Wisdom.

The design of every Religion must be the Happiness of those who embrace it. Impostors, and all who set up new Religions for some politick ends, must always pretend this, or they will have no followers ; for all men propound Happiness to themselves in every thing that they do ; and the Reason why so few men are throughly and entirely of any Religion, is, because they are not sufficiently convinc'd that it will make them happy. But as even false Religions must pretend to make those who profess them happy, so the true one must really effect it : For the true Religion, whether it is innate or reveal'd, must certainly come from God, and must be given by him as a Rule and a Law for those who embrace it to walk by. Now all Laws that are made by good Law-givers, are made for the Happiness of those who embrace them. But God must be good, and consequently cannot make Laws, only because it is his

his Arbitrary will ; no, he must make them, because he who best knows the nature of his own Creatures, knows that they will find their Happiness in being conformable to them. But if the design of all Religion must be to make men happy, why then that must be the true Religion that makes men the most happy : And consequently that must be the true Religion that has the Simplest Design, and the shortest and the surest. For the design of the true Religion being to make men happy, it must necessarily be of such a nature, as that all may be capable of it. For if a Religion, of which none but men of sense were capable, should be the true Religion, it would follow, that God had made most men Blockheads, and afterwards made them wretched for being so. But now let us examine what Religion that is, that takes the shortest and the surest, and most admirable method for making those who embrace it happy.

Since the design of all Religion must be to make men happy, and the only true Religion can effect that design, which all others in vain pretend to, because
only

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only the true Religion can come from God, who alone understands our natures, and alone knows that which the most will please us, it follows, that all who are not really of the true Religion, cannot be perfectly happy. Now this is certain, that Mankind has in all Countries and in all Ages, in all Places and at all Times, complain'd of the want of Happiness. Both Ancients and Moderns, Philosophers and the People, have agreed that Man was miserable. And this universal consent may be sufficient to shew, that the misery of Man is real, and not imaginary; besides, they have all, both Ancients and Moderns, Philosophers and Poets, Men of Sense, and the Vulgar, admirably agreed in describing it. They have all consented in this, that the misery of Man proceeded from a perpetual conflict that is within him, and from a discord continually reigning among the faculties of the Soul; a cruel War between the Passion, and Senses, and the Reason, while the Reason violently draws one way, and the Passions and the Senses another; the latter endeavouring still to be pleas'd by getting the upper hand of the former,

mer, and the former contending to be satisfied by subduing the latter, while neither party can gain an entire victory, but an eternal conflict remains; for tho the frequent advantages are on the side of the Passions, yet Reason rallies from time to time, and maintains a running fight.

*Video Meliora proboq;
Deteriora sequor.*

Says Medea in Ovid.

And says Horace, 8th Epistle of the first Book.

*Dic multa & pulchra minantem,
Vivere nec recte, nec suaviter, haud quia
grando
Contuderit vites, oleamque momorderit aestus:
Nec quia longisquis armentum agrotet in
arvis:*

*Sed quia mente minus validus quam cor-
porę toto,
Nil audire velim, nil discere, quod levet
agrum:*

*Fidis offendar medicis irascar amicis,
Cur me funesto properent arcere veterno:*

Quæ

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*Quæ nocuere sequar, fugiam quæ perfore
credem :*

But St. Paul, who knew the cause of this misery of Mankind, has given by much the most clear and lively Description of it. *Rom. ch. 7: ver. 13.*

15. For that which I do I allow not ; for what I would that do I not, but what I hate that do I.

16. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17. Now then it is no more I but sin that dwelleth in me.

18. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19. For the good which I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

23. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law in my mind,
and

and bringing into captivity the law of sin which is in my members.

24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.*

25. *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, so then with the mind I my self serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.*

Thus has St Paul given a lively Description of the conflict that is in the Human Soul between Passion and Reason, because he very well knew the cause of it. The Philosophers felt the effect, and could describe it tolerably well; but being wholly ignorant of the cause, they took that to be a Defect in Nature, which is really an infectious Distemper; and here lay the folly of those people, in believing that they were capable of altering Nature; which puts me in mind of an Astrological King of Naples, who not being very well pleas'd with what he thought the System and Contrivance of the Universe, said that if God when he made the World would have vouchsaf'd to have consulted him, he could have given him very good advice. For, so by their Writings the Philosophers seem to have been of opinion, that

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that whereas God had made Man Impious, they could make him Good, and whereas he had made him a Blockhead, they could make him Wise.

But the Philosophers not knowing the cause of the misery of Man, made very successless attempts towards the making us happy; for whether they supported the Reason against the Passions, all that they gain'd was to inflame the contention which they design'd to extinguish; and by rousing and exasperating the Parties make that War be carried on with vehemence, which perhaps was in a languishing state before; or whither they animated the Passions against the Reason, they could only mortifie what they could never vanquish.

Thus, whither they endeavour'd to live up to the Dictates of Reason, the Passions plagu'd them by a very violent resistance; or whether they endeavour'd to plunge themselves in sensual pleasure, they could no further oppress the Reason than they stupified the whole Man; and Remorse at last, like the Dragon that watch'd the *Hesperian* fruit, was never to be laid asleep.

But

But tho the Philosophers seem'd wholly in the dark, the Poets appear'd to have a glimmering of the Truth, as we may conclude from the Fable of *Pandora* and *Epimetheus*, whether they had it from old Tradition, or from a Noble Effort of Reason. For, says Mr *Mede*, If there were no Scripture, yet the unsampled Irregularity of our whole Nature, which all the time of our life runs counter to all Order and Right Reason, the woful misery of our condition being a scene of sorrow, without any rest or contentment, this might breed some general suspicion, that *ab initio non fuit ita*, but that he who made us Lords of his Creatures, made us not so worthless and vile as now we are, but that some common Father to us all, had drank some strange and Devilish Poyson, where-with the whole Race was infected. Thus far goes Mr *Mede*, and I will make bold to add, by the leave of the Clergy, that this Suspicion might very well grow up to Reason and Certainty, tho' there were no Scripture. For that Man is miserable, experience assures us; but since Man is a Creature capable of
Hap-

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Happiness, and one who knows his misery, Reason may tell us that Man could never be Created miserable, for that would have been contrary to the goodness of God, which is his Darling Attribute. Since God might as well Damn his Creatures for nothing, as he might Create them miserable. Man therefore was certainly created happy, and happy had he continued till now, if it had not been for his own fault, because it had been repugnant to the Justice of God, to punish Man for nothing. Thus far we may conclude then by the force of Reason, that Man has committed some horrible crime, the which has made him miserable.

But tho' the strength of Reason may reach thus far, yet it could never inform Man of the Nature of the crime, the committing of which has made him miserable, nor in what his original Happiness consisted. All that that we can guess by Reason is this, that since the misery of Man at present lyes in the conflict that he has within himself, and in the Civil War which is maintained in his faculties, that his original Happiness consisted in the Peace and Agreement,

ment, and the Harmony that was between them, and that the Crime that caused his unhappiness, was in all likelihood something that naturally and necessarily broke that Harmony and that Agreement. And that we may see how far these conjectures agree with what our Religion says of it, let us make some enquiry into the account which Sacred Writ has given of it.

That tells us, that man was not in the beginning what he is at present. That he was created Holy, Innocent, Perfect. That his Creator fill'd him with the brightness of Knowledge, and with a luminous lively Intelligence. That he then had a strict dependence on his Maker. That he communicated the wonders of his Glory to him. That the Eye of Man then saw the Majesty of God; and that this Creature, so miserable now, was then most entirely happy. That he was unclouded, untroubled, impaired, impassive, immortal. This is the account that our Religion gives us of the primitive state of Man. It tells us, how great his Knowledge was,

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his Happiness and his Perfection. Let us now see how much his Passions and his Sences were able to contribute to so much Felicity.

That Man in his Original State had Passions and great Passions, is certain. For without Passion there can be no Happiness, because there can be no Pleasure. Besides, it must be by a great Passion, or by great Passions that the first Man must fall. For by the weakness of his Reason he could not be lost: For if he had not had Reason enough to know that he ought not to have committed the transgression which ruin'd him, why then the ruin of Man had not been his own fault. Man therefore before the Fall had Passions, but being in a state of Perfect Felicity, he could consequently be subject to no Passions, which were not entirely consistent with that. He walked with God, and was then united to him, because the Creator was pleas'd to communicate himself in so great a degree to his Creature. Man therefore constantly contemplated

templated God, not so much by the force of Reason as of Intuition, or a luminous lively Intelligence. God acted upon his mind, and he felt him as well as saw him, and consequently Admir'd, Lov'd, Desir'd, Ador'd him, and the result of these charming Passions was a Joy unspeakable. For the more they were exalted, the more his Reason approv'd of them; and since it knew that he could never suffer by them in that state of Happiness and of Immortality, it eternally exhorted him to perpetuate them, and told him that they could never be too high for their Glorious Object. So that man in his primitive State was always in lofty ravishing Transports. For Love, Admiration, Joy and Desire, those charming Passions were all that he knew, of which Blissful Love was always the chief. For God making Man a sociable Creature, gave him such a sort of a Happiness, as that the Felicity of one might produce that of another; and what could that be but an habitual Charity, or loving God and Man for the sake of God. Our blissful Sire enjoy'd

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a sincere felicity, and consequently could never know any trouble, nor any passion that had a mixture of trouble, as anger, sorrow, fear, and the like. Much less could Ambition find room in his breast, with Envy, Hatred, Pride, and Revenge, and the rest of those Turbulent passions that are utterly inconsistent with Charity.

And as his passions were always pleasing, so his senses were never shock'd: The happy creature convers'd with Angels, and saw the Majesty of his Maker. And for the Terrestrial Objects which were around him, and which were all subjected to his universal Empire, whenever he survey'd them, like his Creator, he found that they were always good; and as the Creatures never were Disobedient, he was never Displeas'd with them. For, as he had neither fear nor knowledge of suffering, Antipathy, Aversion, Horror, and the like, were things that he never knew, which in this woful state of misery, are so often Nature's secret Intelligencers, to advise us of approaching harm. Thus all the Faculties were always pleas'd, and man was bless'd unspeakably.

But

But the result of this perfect Harmony, was not only continual Happiness, but unclouded Knowledge and Immortality. For, as from the Agreement of the vital Faculties, and their concord-ing motions, Spirit and Health and pleasant Ease, and vigour of Sense proceeds; so from the Harmony of the Rational and Animal powers proceeded a luminous lively Intelligence, and a blisful Immortality. For pleasure was the result of that Agreement, and since Death can only come by pain, he who is in a state of perpetual pleasure, must by consequence be Immortal.

But Man alas was unable to support so much Happiness without Presumption. He form'd the Design of growing Independant, of shaking off the government of him who made him, and finding his felicity apart from God. This made him conceive the Horrible Crime, of Diverting his affections from him who alone was worthy of them; to things that were form'd so many degrees inferiour to him: and that which made the unpardonable enormity of that crime was this, that when God had created him with an ardent desire of Happiness,

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and had created him of such a nature, that his full and his perfect Happiness lay in his strict dependance on him, and had given him a clear understanding to know this ; that, I say, made the unpardonable enormity of his Crime, that, contrary to this Nature, and this Desire, and this unclouded Knowledge, he revolted and fell off from God, and by the suggestion of his greatest enemy, tax'd him at once with folly and envy, in believing himself capable of finding and enjoying a greater felicity than what his Maker design'd for him. And thus Mans fatal Original Sin, whether the business of the Tree of Knowledge is Literal or Allegorical, consisted in his horribly diverting his affections from his God to the Creatures. And thus the Harmony of his Intellectual and Animal powers was very miserably broke. For Reason disapprov'd of the unworthy objects that Man had chosen for his Passions, and the Passions being natural and congenial to the Soul, could not be idle, and Man could not reduce them to their primitive object. For God had abandon'd him to himself, and how should Man of himself approach Infinity?

And

And now the blissful Time was no more, when Man was only touch'd with transporting Passions. And now the force of those Charming Passions was continually curb'd by Reason, which utterly disapprov'd of their objects; and a thousand vexatious ones sprung up among them, like cockle to choak the vital seed, and which were partly the result of present misery, and partly of past felicity.

Besides, the Sences partook of the same Disorder that had seiz'd the Passions; and they that during his state of Innocence, were always pleas'd with the approbation of Reason, and were ne're Disturb'd, now either betray'd him to Concupiscence, or were shock'd at their several objects. His Eye and his Ear, those noble ministers of the Understanding, were no longer charm'd with the voice of God, and the glorious presence of Angels; and were either too much engag'd by the Terrestrial objects around them, or disturb'd in despite of Reason. The Creatures whom God had furnish'd with instinct sufficient for the care of their preservation, in their Degenerate Monarch beheld

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their Enemy. They gladly obey'd him during his Innocence, as Loyal Subjects do a good King; but when he grew wicked he grew a Tyrant, and they at the same time turn'd Rebels. From hence Aversions, Horrors, Antipathies, and Fear and Hate and Rage sprung up in them; and Man was got into a state of War with all the inferiour Creatures, who of his Humble Vassals before, were now his Potent Enemies. Both Parties were on their Guard incessantly, always dreaded, and always terrify'd.

And thus the Harmony of the Intellectual and Animal powers was dissolv'd by Original Sin. And the Ignorance of this, caus'd all the blunders of the Philosophers. They knew very well, that the Combat between the Reason and Passions caus'd the misery of Man, but they never dreamt of reconciling the difference, because alas they never thought that the parties had once been friends. All that they aim'd at, was to put an end to the conflict, by destroying one of the parties, and so some of them thought of stifling the Reason, and others of suppressing the Passions.

But the folly of these two Designs was equally great, because they are attempts at things that are equally Impossible. For as long as Man is Man he must have Reason, and as long as there is Reason there will be Remorse, which will rally from time to time, and be a check upon the exorbitance of the Passions. And tho Remorse could be entirely extinguish'd, as I believe it never can, yet Reason would be sure to make its Declaration another way, and that is by our inconstancy in pleasure, and our want of variety.

Nor is the folly less of endeavouring to suppress the Passions, for either they must be wholly suppress'd or restrain'd; But all the Passions being natural, in the condition in which Man is now, none of them can be wholly suppress'd without destroying the Man, nor can some of them be so much as moderated, without maintaining constantly in the soul a very violent conflict, because they were perfectly unrestrain'd in their original Natures.

The Passions are either natural and congenial to the Soul, or accidental: These first are those which are pleasing
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to it, as Love, Joy, Desire, and with these the first Man was created, for Man was created Happy ; but without these Passions there can be no Happiness. The accidental Passions, as Anger, Envy, Indignation, and Desire of Revenge, are those with which Man at the first was not created, for they all include Misery, and he was created Happy. They were all the result of the fall, which brought woe to the Race of Men. Man is indeed capable of restraining these last, because they all of them include Misery, and he retaining a vehement desire of Happiness, tho' joyn'd to an impotence of attaining it, is by that very Desire capacitated to struggle with apparent Misery. But it must needs be a hard contention when we pretend to moderate the first, because there is something within us that secretly tells us they are necessary to our Happiness ; and the conflict must needs be violent, when we strive against our own Happiness. Besides, they are as natural to the Soul as Reasoning, and the result of that ; and a Reasonable Creature can no more be without Admiration, Love and Desire, than it can be without Thinking,

ing, or without the appetites of Sence; and a Man can no more suppress the one by Philosophy than the other. He can no more take away Love and Desire by Reasoning, than he can satisfy Hunger and Thirst with a Syllogism. All that he can arrive at, is either to conceal those Passions, as he may do his Appetites, or to refuse to act in consequence of them, as he may in consequence of Thinking, or of Sensual Appetites. Or lastly, He may weaken these congenial Passions by Mortification, as he may do his Appetites or his Reason. For a Distemper weakens the whole Man, and Mortification is a Distemper in effect at least. But when the man is in health, and his Sences vigorous, and his Reason piercing, these Appetites too will be strong. And the more powerful the Reason is, the stronger will be the Passions: And therefore the attempt to suppress these was folly in the Philosophers. For these Passions are the pleasure of the Soul, which cannot struggle with success against felicity. The cause of their mistake was this; Some of them, as for example, the *Stoicks*, thought that Reason disapprov'd
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of the Passions, when she only dislik'd the Objects ; whereas the *Cyrenaicks* on the other hand thought that Humane Nature allow'd of the Objects, when it did nothing but approve of the Passions.

And this may serve to shew the folly of Deism as well as it may of Philosophy. For Deism pretending, like Philosophy, to combat all the Passions, must be founded on the strength of Reason. But a Religion founded on the strength of Reason, cannot be the true Religion. For the true Religion must be sent from God, for the Happiness of Mankind, and of that Religion all must be capable, as we have shown above. But of a Religion founded on the strength of Reason, and whose proofs must of consequence be deduc'd from a long train of consequences, all men are not capable, for every Religion must have proofs, and all men are not capable of the proofs of such a Religion as that. As for example : before a man can be a Deist effectually, he must be convinc'd of the being of a God by Reason, and must be convinc'd by the same Reason that the World is govern'd by

by God. But to be capable of the proofs that Deism gives of those two points, a man must either have a very strong Reason, or a very good education, whereas not so much as one in forty of Mankind has either. But all are capable of the proofs of Revealed Religion: For by proving the Divinity of the Revelation, the Doctrine is proved in course. Now the Divinity of the Revelation must be prov'd by Miracles. But Miracles are proofs of which all men are capable, because they speak to the Passions and appeal to the Sences. Since therefore the true Religion must be design'd for all; and all men are capable of the proofs of Reveal'd Religion, whereas not one in forty is capable of the proofs of Deism, it follows that a Religion that is not Reveal'd cannot be the True Religion.

Besides, no Religion can be the True Religion that is insufficient to answer the ends of Government. But a Religion that is not design'd for all, can never answer the ends of Government. And therefore Deism cannot be the True Religion. For there are buttwo things that can restrain mankind, and keep them

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them within the power of Law ; Religion, and sense enough to know their real Interest. But we have already made it appear above, that whoever wants good sense cannot be restrain'd by Deism.

That Deism is insufficient to answer the ends of Government, may be further plain from matter of fact ; for it would be an easie thing to convince the Reader that there never was any tolerable Government in the World without a Reveal'd Religion ; and that the Governments that have been most Renown'd upon Earth, flourish'd with their respective Revelations, and with them decay'd, as the *Israelites* did with their Prophets, the *Grecians* with their Oracles, and the *Romans* with their Divinations ; so that either the True Religion can be in the World without order and without peace, or Deism cannot possibly be the True Religion.

Again, either that can be the True Religion, which can contribute nothing even to the Happiness of those who embrace it, or Deism cannot be the True Religion. For Deism contributes nothing at all to the Happiness even of those

those who are capable of it, because that by combating and resisting the Passions, it maintains the War of the Faculties, instead of appeasing it.

Thus we have shewn that the Design of the True Religion must not only be to make men Happy, but must effectually do it; that the Philosophers indeed had that Design, but blunder'd in the execution of it; and by pretending either to set up our Passions above our Reason, or our Reason above our Passions, only maintain'd an eternal conflict in the breasts they design'd to ease; that the Deist does the very same thing, by his endeavours to exalt Reason by depressing the Passions. Let us now shew how the Christian Religion exalts our Reason by exalting the Passions, and by a plain and a short, but a most admirable Design, restores the Harmony of the Human Faculties, and the Felicity of the first man.

For, after that Christianity has gain'd its professors, by proving after the most plain and simple manner all that is necessary to be believ'd in it; that is, by Miracles attested by unexceptionable Witnesses, it gains its end, which is the
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Happiness of its believers, in so plain, so sure, and so short a way, that the way to Happiness and the end is but one and the same thing, and differs only in Degree. *Set your affections on things above, and not on things below*, says the Apostle, *Coloss. 1. 2.* That is, Do but earnestly desire of God to incline your affections to him, their primitive object ; Do but desire it, and he will incline them, and the great business of Religion is done, the Harmony of the Human Faculties restor'd, and the Felicity of the first man in some measure at least renew'd. Nay, the way is shorter and plainer even than this. For, Do but earnestly desire of God to give you Charity, and he will give it, and with that give every Virtue. For, to shew how plain, how short, how admirable, the Design is of this Divine Religion, Love, which is but a single Passion, and the most pleasing of all the Passions, comprehends all its Duties and all its Felicity. St Paul has given an admirable reason why it comprehends all its Duties ; for Love, says he, worketh no ill to his Neighbour, and is therefore the fulfilling of the Law.

Law. And that it is inclusive of all its Felicity, may be concluded from hence, that Charity gently restraining those tumultuous Passions which disturb and torment the mind, exalts all the pleasing affections which are natural and congenial to the Soul, and exalts the very Reason of Mankind, by exalting those charming Passions. For Reason being troubled no more in its Functions, by the painful conflict which it maintain'd before, is free to discern and distinguish Divine Truth, and now employs the extent and stretch of its power, in confirming and augmenting the force of those aspiring Passions, which, while they were directed to mortal objects, it esteem'd its mortal Enemies. And as the Reason rouses and excites the Passions, the Passions, as it were in a fiery vehicle, transport the Reason above Mortality, which mounting, soars to the Heaven of Heavens, upon the wings of those very affections that before repress'd the Noble Efforts that it made to ascend the Skies.

And thus we have seen how the Christian Religion reconciles Passion to Reason. And while the troublesome

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Virtues of Deists and old Philosophers, are employ'd in restraining those charming Passions, which are so natural to the Soul of man, and which, rightly directed, constitute all its Felicity, the Cardinal Virtues of the true Religion, as Faith, and Hope and Charity, are exalted Passions themselves. And as Christianity confirms and cherishes all the pleasing affections, which are to the Soul, as so many delicious Friends, and so many dear Relations, the very conversation of which is sufficient to make it happy, it gently appeases the tumultuous Passions, accidental uneasy guests that interrupt its pleasure.

But the Christian Religion restores the harmony of the Human Powers to a greater degree than this, and provides even a pleasure of Sense that may be highly approv'd of by Reason. For though the Christian in this life is not allowed to expect that in a Sovereign degree, yet, since there is no sight so charming to the Eye, and no Musick so harmonious to the Ear, as the voice and looks of those whom we love, the Christian Religion by commanding us,
1 Epist. of St Pet. ch. 1. v. 2. *To love one*

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another with a pure heart fervently, has provided in an admirable manner for the delight of those noble Sences.

Thus the proofs of Christianity are short, and plain, and its Doctrine that leads to Felicity admirably short and unperplex'd, whereas the proofs of Deism are abstruse, (I mean to the People they are abstruse,) and we have shewn that the true Religion must be designed for all, and the method that it takes to make us happy, tedious and vexatious. And this is extreamly remarkable, that the very morality which in Deism and in Philosophy is prov'd, at the first perhaps with difficulty, and perhaps at the last obscurely ; and when it is prov'd, obey'd with pain, because it shocks all the pleasing Passions which so firmly inhere to the Soul, that very Morality in the Christian Religion is clearly and easily prov'd to all, because the Divinity of its Revelation is clearly and easily prov'd, and when it is prov'd is pursu'd with pleasure, because it is every part of it dictated by Love, the best and sweetest of all the Passions.

And thus Christianity performs in a moment, what Philosophy and Deism have for Ages in vain attempted. For God can touch the Heart in a moment,

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and a short contrition makes way for a long felicity. And the wisdom of God seems loudly to declare the simplicity of his great design, by the persons whom he chose to execute it. For had there been any thing perplex'd or difficult in it, Men of Choice Education and great Parts, would have been chosen to expound it. But it was so easie, so clear, so agreeable to the Nature of Man, whether consider'd as an Individual, or a Member of a vast Society, (for Charity, that makes the Happiness of particulars, tends to the felicity of the whole community ; and whereas Justice is satisfied with the restraining men from the doing harm, Charity, the most active and the best natur'd of all virtues, engages him to the doing good ; and there can be no such prevalent motive for the making any one happy , as because we love him) the design, I say, of this Holy Religion, is so agreeable to the nature of man, that God made choice of twelve poor Fishermen, or something more vile to human regard than Fishermen, to propagate its Divine Doctrine. And to whom did they preach it ? Not to Brutal Savages, as
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Orpheus did his pretended Revelation before them, nor to bloody Barbarians, as *Mahomet* did his Fanatick Enthusiasm afterwards, but to the most civiliz'd and knowing Nations of the World, when Learning was at the greatest heighth amongst them; to the Provinces of the *Lesser Asia*, who were the most subtle people on the Earth; to *Greece* the great Inventress of Arts; and to *Rome* the Mistress of Nations: to *Rome*, that with her victorious Armies, had even then, just then subdu'd and civiliz'd the barbarous World. And twelve poor ignorant contemptible Fishermen, who were dispis'd by their own Nation, and whose Nation it self was almost universally despicable, in a very short time establish'd this Doctrine in the midst of these knowing Nations; nay, and establish'd it without Arts, without Eloquence, without Reputation, without Power, and downright Innocence and Simplicity prevail'd o're the subtilty of the *Asiatics*, the vigorous lively penetration of the *Greeks*, and the profound solidity of the *Romans*. So that Knowledge blushing was instructed by Ignorance, and the vain efforts of all human

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Wisdom stood confounded by the foolishness of Preaching; And the Apostle had a great deal of reason to exult in the first Ep. to the *Cor.* v. 20, 21. Where is the Wise? Where is the *Scribe*? Where is the Disputer of this World? Hath not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World? For after that by the Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe; and v. the 27th, *ibid.* God hath chosen the foolish things of this World to confound the Wisdom of the Wise. So that this Religion, propagated under these strange disadvantages, by Ignorance against Philosophy, by Simplicity against Arts and Eloquence, by Weakness against all the opposition of Power, by abject and contemptible persons, against the noise and renown of Wisdom, by men under poverty and persecution, against all the Flatteries of Imperial Tyrants; this Divine Religion, embraced with danger, boasted of in sufferings, and taught in Martyrdom; this Religion, I say, thus wonderfully propagated, must needs have had something in the design of it, when it was but never

ver so little attended to, that is extreamly agreeable to the Nature of Man, and must be better adapted to make a Creature, compounded of Passions and Reason Happy, than either Power or Place, or Worldly Prosperity, or Fame, or Philosophy, were before. But what could be so agreeable to the nature of a Creature compounded of the foresaid Faculties, as that which reconciled those Faculties which neither Fame nor Philosophy, Riches nor Power could ever be found to do, or how could twelve poor wretched Fishermen, without education, without parts, comprehend what the worlds great Sages could never find out, or how could they consent against apparent interest in making it known to the world, if they had not been instructed and compell'd to act by something that was more than Human ?

And thus we have shewn, How that the Design of all Religion must be to make men Happy, but that the True Religion must not only design it, but must effectually do it. And then we proceeded to shew, that the misery of man consisting in the conflict which is maintain'd within him, his Happiness

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by consequence must proceed from the Harmony which is in the Human Faculties ; then we shew'd how that Harmony came to be broke, and how it was afterwards by the Christian Religion restored.

But now, as the end of every Religion must be the happiness of those who embrace it, so the design of every Art must be the very same, as has been always acknowledged by all who have enquired into the Nature of Art in general, or into the designs of particular Arts. And as the true Religion must not only propound the Happiness of its Professors, but must really effect it, and as that alone is the true Religion, which makes the best provision for the happiness of those who profess it ; so that must be the best and the noblest Art which brings the greatest Felicity with it. But as the misery of man proceeds from the discord and those civil jars that are maintained within him, it follows that nothing can make him happy, but what can remove that discord, and restore the Harmony of the Human Faculties. So that that must be the best and the noblest Art, which makes the best Provision at the
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same time for the satisfaction of all the Faculties, the Reason, the Passions, the Sences. But none of them provides in such a Sovereign manner as Poetry, for the satisfaction of the whole man together. In some of them only Reason finds its account, as in Logick and Mathematicks. In some of them only Reason and Passion, as in the Ancient Eloquence, and that by no means in a Sovereign degree, for sometimes the Passions oppress the Reason, and sometimes Reason excludes the Passions. In others the Passions and the Sences are charm'd, while Reason finds little contentment in them. Thus Musick by its Harmony raises the Passions, at the same time that it pleases the Ear, and Painting by its touches moves the affections, at the same time that it charms the Eye. But in a sublime and accomplish'd Poem, the Reason and Passions and Sences are pleas'd at the same time superlatively. The Reason in the soundness and importance of the Moral, and the greatness and justness of an Harmonious design, whose parts so beautiful, when they are considered separately, become transporting upon a view of the whole, while we are never weary of
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contemplating their exact proportion and beautiful Symmetry, and their secret wonderful dependance, while they are all animated by the same Spirit in order to the same end. The reason further finds its account, in the exact perpetual of Servance of Decorums, and in beholding itself exalted by the exaltation of the Passions, and in seeing those Passions in their fiercest transports, confin'd to those bounds, which that has severely prescrib'd them. That the Passions must find their account in Poetry, we have endeavour'd to prove in the former part of this Treatise, but we cannot forbear taking notice of this, that those very Passions which plague and torment us in life, please us, nay, transport us in Poetry. That the noble senses find their account in an accomplish'd Poem, no one who has read one, can a moment doubt. Nor *Corelli's* Hand nor *Syphace's* voice, could ever to a judicious ear equal the *Virgilian* Harmony: Which has all the Mastery, with all the Air, and all the Sweetness, with all the Force, that the most delicate Ear can require. Tho all his Numbers are always perfect, yet he never dwells upon any; and they

they which are in themselves so pleasing, delight us the more, because we are immediately forc'd to leave them for the perfection of some different Harmony. Nor is the Eye less satisfied than the Ear, For an Admirable Poet always Paints, and all his Pictures are always Beautiful: Let the real objects be never so odious, let them be never so dreadful, yet he is sure to paint them Delightful. For, tho sometimes a vigorous lively Imitation of Creatures that are in their natures noxious, may be capable of giving us Terror, yet Nature, by giving us a secret Intelligence that the object is not real, can turn even that Tormenting Passion to pleasure.

Thus Poetry, by restoring the Harmony of the Human Faculties, provides for the Happiness of Mankind, better than any other Human Invention whatever. And 'tis for this reason that it has always been so highly esteem'd by the greatest of men. They who have arriv'd at the being Masters of the Universe, have afterwards entertain'd the Ambition of becoming Poets; and after they have acquir'd a great deal of Fame by making whole Nations miserable, have

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have aspir'd to the more charming glory of making mankind happy. 'Tis for this very reason, that this Delicious Art has had as many Confessors, if I may be allow'd to call them so, almost as Religion it self. 'Tis for this very reason, that so many have been willing to renounce all worldly greatness for it, and pleasure which attends on power, and have been contented to live poor and miserable, pitied by the wise, and contemn'd by fools, persecuted by fortune, and hated by one another.

For, no man leaves pleasure but for greater pleasure, and he who forsakes all the world for Poetry, must find a Happiness in that, which all the world could not supply him with. Poetry seems to be a noble attempt of Nature, by which it endeavours to exalt it self to its happy primitive state; and he who is entertain'd with an accomplish'd Poem, is for a time at least restor'd to Paradise. That happy man converses boldly with Immortal Beings. Transported he beholds the Gods ascending and descending, and every Passion in its turn is charm'd, while that his Reason is supremely satisfied. Perpetual Harmony attends his
Ear,

Ear, his Eye perpetual Pleasure. Ten thousand different objects he surveys, and the most dreadful please him. Tygers and Lyons he beholds like the first Man with joy, because like him he sees them without danger. But nothing that is meerly Human can be on all sides perfect. The Delight which Poetry gives is neither perpetual, nor are all men capable of it. Religion alone can provide man a pleasure that is lasting, as it may be universal. Poetical fire neither always burns in us, nor can it always warm us, but Charity, like the sacred flame that was the guardian of the *Roman* Empire, if 'tis with care maintain'd like that, becomes like that eternal.

But now since the design of Poetry, and the very method of prosecuting that design, as far as it can be humanly prosecuted, is the same with that of the True Religion, since the very thing that they both propose is to exalt the Reason by exalting the Passions, and so make Happy the whole Man by making Internal Discord cease, I appeal to any one whether Poetry must not agree better with that Religion, whose Designs are the very same with it, than with Paganism

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ganism or Philosophy or Deism, whose Designs have been shewn repugnant to it. In short, when the Pagan Theology was brought nearer to the Christian Religion, by the Philosophy of *Plato* ; as it was modelled by *Virgil* , it became the fitter for Poetry. For *Virgil* saw with an admirable judgment, not only that the Reason must find its account in Poetry , as well as the Passions and the Sences, but that the Reason of Mankind, in the time of *Augustus Cæsar*, when Moral Philosophy got ground every day in the World, would not be satisfied at so easy a rate, as it was when *Homer* writ ; or at least that it would not long be satisfied at so easy a rate ; which oblig'd him to model the *Grecian* Revelation by the Philosophy of *Plato*, and that got *Virgil* the preheminance over *Homer*. For since the design of every Art is to make men happy, and that is the best and the noblest Art which makes the best provision for the happiness of Mankind, and nothing can make man so happy as the reconciling him to himself, which can be no way so effectually done, as by making all the Faculties find their

their satisfaction together, it follows that that must be the noblest Poetry, where the Reason, the Passions and Sences, are all of them pleas'd, and pleas'd in the highest degree together. And therefore those we should be obliged to grant what some will pretend with so much obstinacy, and which I can never believe, that the Passions and the Sences find their account in *Homer* better than they do in *Virgil*, yet since they find their account too in *Virgil*, in a very great degree, and Reason at the same time is satisfied, whereas it is horribly shock'd in *Homer* by the extravagance of his Theology, it follows that *Virgil* for that Reason is certainly to be preferred to *Homer*; tho' this is to be said in the behalf of the latter, that he writ to the people of his own age, in which the Reason of Mankind was satisfy'd at an easier rate.

And therefore when I say that *Virgil* is to be preferr'd to *Homer*, I mean that he is so in regard to us, because he is capable of giving us a greater pleasure than *Homer*, but I do not pretend at the same time that *Virgil* is capable of giving us a greater pleasure than *Homer* gave

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gave his Contemporaries. As likewise when I affirm, that the Moderns, by joyning Poetry with the True Religion, will have the Advantage of the Ancients, I mean only in regard to us, to whom they will give a greater pleasure than the Ancients can do, but not a greater than the Ancients gave their Contemporaries. In short, if *Virgil* was forc'd to model his *Grecian* Revelation by *Platonism*, that he might please more effectually even in his time, when that Revelation as yet prevail'd ; I think we may very well conclude that in our time we ought to sling it out of our Poetry, when it has been for so long time utterly exploded, and contemn'd by the very Boys. Thus the *Grecian* Religion and the Modern Poetry can agree but very indifferently, because the Reason is shock'd by it. And if Reason is shock'd by the Religion which is joyn'd with the Poetry ; by the Religion, I say, which gives the force to the Passions, as we have shewn above ; I would fain know how the Passions can very well find their account. I know indeed very well, that a Poet, by the force of a strong Imagination, may enter into the *Grecian*

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Religion when he sets himself to write, and transport himself to the Age and Scene of his Action ; and consequently may draw a great deal of advantage from the Religion of that Country, and of that Age, in order to the being mov'd ; and if the Poet is extremely mov'd himself, why they who read him must be mov'd in some measure too ; but whether the generality of Readers can be so very much mov'd, as if the Passions deriv'd their Force from a Religion that is more familiar to them, I have a great deal of reason to doubt : But if Reason cannot find its account in the *Grecian* Religion join'd with the Modern Poetry, much less would the Passions find their satisfaction in Deism or the Ancient Philosophy. The Christian Religion alone can supply a Poet with all that is Sublime and Majestick in Reason ; all that is either soft or powerful, either engaging or Imperious in the Passions ; and with all the objects that are most admirable to the senses, and consequently most delightful ; as shall be shewn at large in the following Chapter.

C H A P. II.

WE shew'd in the former part of this Treatise, that the Ancients excell'd the Moderns in the greatnels of Poetry, because they incorporated Poetry with Religion ; and we pretended to shew in this Second Part, That by joyning Poetry with the true Religion, the Moderns in the main will have the advantage of the Ancients. In order to the proving which, we shew'd in the first Chapter, that the design of the Christian Religion was agreeable to that of Poetry ; whereas the Designs of Paganism and Deism and Philosophy were not agreeable to it. We shew'd that the true Design of Poetry, as well as of the Christian Religion, was to please the Reason, the Passions and the Sences at the same time. For we shew'd in the former part of this Treatise, that Passion, whether ordinary or Enthusiastick, is the principal thing in Poetry ; and nothing is more certain than that the more
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the Sences are stirr'd, and the more the Reason at the same time is satisfied, the more strongly for the most part the Passions of Reasonable creatures are mov'd.

Now in this Chapter we pretend to shew, that the true Divine Poetry has the advantage of the Pagan Poetry ; that it satisfies the Reason more, at the same time that it raises a stronger Passion, and that it entertains the Sences, and especially the Eye, more delightfully ; and we pretend to give undeniable instances of it, both from Sacred Writ, and from one of the Fathers, and from one of our own Poets.

There is certainly no subject so great as the power of God, and both *Homer* and *Virgil* have handled it to admiration. The latter says of *Jupiter*, who presided at the Council of the Gods, in the Tenth Book.

Tum pater omnipotens, rerum cui prima potestas,

*Infit, eo dicente, deum domus alta silescit,
Et tremefacta solo tellus ; silet arduus æther :*

Tum Zephyri posuere : premit placida æquora pontus.

And thus Mr Dryden has made it *English*.

*Then thus to both, reply'd th' Imperial God,
Who shakes Heav'n's axels with his awful
Nod :*

*When he begins, the silent Senate stand
With Reverence, list'ning to the dread Com-
mand ;*

*The Clouds dispell, the Winds their Breath
restrain,*

And the hush'd Waves lie flatted on the Main.

But *Virgil* has handled this subject still after a greater manner, in the first of the *Georgicks*. And that the Reader may have all the force of it set before his Eyes, we shall show him how 'tis prepared, and begin a little before it.

*Sæpe ego cuxi flavis messorum induceret arvis
Agricola, & fragili jam stringeret hordea
culmo,*

*Omnia ventorum concurrere prælia vidi :
Quæ gravidam late segetem ab radicibus
imis*

*Sublime expulsam eruerent. Ita turbine nigro
Ferret hiems culmumque levem, stipulasque
volanteis.*

Sæpe

*Sæpe etiam immensum cælo vanit agmen
aquarum,*

*Et sædam glomerant tempestatem imbribus
atris*

*Collectæ ex alto nubes : ruit arduus æther,
Et pluvia ingenti sata læta, boumque labores
Diluit : implentur fossæ, & cava flumina
crescunt*

*Cum sonitu, fervetque fretis spirantibus æquor.
Ipse pater, media nimborum in nocte cornusca
Fulmina molitur dextra : quo maxima mota
Terra tremit : fugere feræ; & mortalia corda
Per genteis humilis stravit pavor. Ille flagranti
Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia
telo*

*Dejicit, ingeminant Austri, & densissimus
imber.*

*Nunc memora ingenti vento, nunc litora
plangunt.*

And Mr Dryden has made it English after so noble a manner, that he has done all the Justice, that our Language would allow him, to the admirable original.

*Oft have I seen a sudden Storm arise,
From all the warring Winds that sweep the
Skies :*

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*The heavy Harvest from the Root is torn,
And whirl'd aloft the lighter stubble born;
With such a force, the flying Rack is driv'n,
And such a Winter wears the face of Heav'n;
And oft whole Sheets descend of sluicy Rain,
Suck'd by the spongy Clouds from off the Main:
The lofty Skies at once come pow'ring down,
The promis'd Crop and Golden labours
drown.*

*The Dykes are fill'd, and with a roaring
sound,*

*The rising Rivers float the nether ground,
And Rocks the bellowing voice of Boiling
Seas rebound.*

*The Father of the Gods his glory shrouds,
Involv'd in Tempests, and a night of Clouds,
And from the middle darkness flashing out,
By fits he deals his fiery Bolts about.*

*Earth feels the motions of her angry God,
Her Entrails tremble, and her Mountains nod,
And flying Beasts in Forests seek abode.*

*Deep Horror seizes every Human Breast,
Their pride is humbled, and their fear confest.
While he from high his rowling Thunder
throws,*

*And fires the Mountains with repeated
blows.*

The

*The Rocks are from their old Foundations
rent ;*

*The Winds redouble, and the Rains augment,
The Waves on heaps are dash'd against the
Shore,*

*And now the Woods, and now the Billows
roar.*

But now let us see how the Psalmist has treated the same subject in the eighteenth Psalm, and we shall find, that the greatness of *Virgil* is littleness compared to his.

6. *In my distress I called upon the Lord,
and cryed unto my God : He heard my
voice out of his Temple, and my cry came
before him; even into his Ears.*

7. *Then the Earth shook and trembled,
the foundations of the Hills also moved and
were shaken, because he was wrath.*

8. *There went up a smok out of his No-
strils, and fire out of his Mouth devoured,
Coals were kindled by it.*

9. *He bowed the Heavens also and came
down, and darkness was under his Feet.*

10. *And he rode upon a Cherub, and
did fly ; He came flying upon the Wings
of the Winds.*

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11. He made darkness his secret place ;
His pavilion round about him were dark
waters, and thick clouds of the skies.

12. At the brightness that was before him his
clouds removed hail-stones and coals of fire.

12. The Lord also thundered in the
Heavens, and the highest gave his voice,
Hailstones and Coals of Fire.

14. Yea, he sent forth his arrows and scat-
tered them, and he shot out lightnings, and
discomfited them.

15. Then the channels of waters were
seen, and the foundations of the world
were discovered, at thy Rebuke, O Lord,
at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

Now, in the first place, Reason finds
its account better here than it does in
Virgil ; for the more amazing effects
that we see of Divine displeasure, the
more it answers our Idea of infinite
wrath. But there is nothing that *Vir-
gil* has said upon this subject, but what
is much stronger in the Psalmist ; and
there are several things in the latter,
which are by no means in *Virgil*. For
example, how much stronger is *the Hills*
also moved, and were shaken, because he
was wroth, than that of *Virgil*.

Ille

Ille flagranti

*Ant Atho ant Rhodopen, ant alta Ceraunia
Telo*

Dejicit.

Which only signifies the Thunders rending the tops of the Mountains ; which any one may see is weak in comparison of what *David* says, That the very Mountains seem'd to have a sense of the Indignation of their Creator. Mr *Dryden* endeavour'd to add strength to this passage of *Virgil* :

*Earth feels the motions of its angry God,
Her Entrails tremble, and her Mountains
nod.*

But he too falls very much short of the force of the Psalmist ; for he makes the Trembling of the Earth, and the Nodding of the Mountains, to be only the natural necessary effects of mechanical motion.

And that which satisfies the Reason the more here, raises the Passion more strongly, and entertains the senses the better, because there are more, and more

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more amazing effects of the Divine pleasure. For how great, how lofty, how terrible is that ; *He bowed the Heavens and came down, and darkness was under his feet ?* How much stronger than that of *Virgil, Ipse pater, &c.* And how Poetical and how Dreadful is that. *Then the Channels of the Waters were seen, and the foundations of the World were discovered ; at thy Rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.* How terribly is the Eye delighted here, which is a sense that the Poet ought chiefly to entertain ; because it contributes more than any other to the exciting of strong Passion ? And here I desire the Reader to consider, that there is more Terror here, both ordinary and Enthusiastick, and consequently more spirit in a faint Copy, nay, a Prosaick Copy, translated in the Imperfection of our Tongue, and by men who in all likelihood had no manner of notion of Poetry, than there is in *Virgil's* original. What force and what infinite Spirit must there not have been in the original *Hebrew* ? Since these are thoughts that are so truly great, and so truly lofty, that they carry with them spirit and force and fire, through what-

whatever head they pass, and whatever language ; how admirable and inimitable must they not have been, in the hands of that Divine Poet, who knew how to shew them to the utmost advantage. The Character of *Buchanan* is by no means Elevation, but yet he is so exalted in this description, that he soars above *Virgil*, who is by nature lofty.

*Ille super solio residens flammantis Olympi
Audiit orantem, postquam pervenit in altum
Clamor, & attentas advertit questibus aures.
Protinus e vultu Domini conterrita Tellus
Intremuit, montesque caua compage soluti.
Nutarunt, penitusq; imis fremuere Cavernis,
Fumeus afflatu de naribus æstus anhelos
Undabat : Rapida contorto vertice flammæ
Ore fluunt, vivaq; animant attacta fovilla.
Utq; suum Dominum Terræ Demittat in
orbem*

*Leniter inclinat justum fastigia Cælum :
Succedunt pedibus fusca Caliginis umbræ.
Ile, vehens curru volucris, cui flammæ ales
Lora tenens, levibus ventorum ad Remigat
alis*

*Se circum furvo nebularum involuit amictu,
Præterenditq; cavas piceis in nubibus undas.
Acribus ex oculis vibratæ spicula, flammæ
Dis-*

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*Discutiunt tristes claro fulgore tenebras.
Inde ruit crepitans lapidosa grandinis Im-
ber,*

*Discurfantq; vagæ sinuosa volumina flamme.
At vero ut sancto sermone silentia rupit,
Protinus Horrifico tonitru cælum omne Re-
mugit :*

*Grandinis, & crebrâ tellus crepitante pro-
cella*

*Pulsa sonat, Ruptisq; micant e nubibus
ignes.*

*Flamiferæq; volant magnum per inane sa-
gittæ.*

*Fulguraque Ingeminant ; Laticum concussa
Lacunas*

*Pandit Hians tellus, & fontibus ora relaxat.
Succutiturque pauens, & fundamenta Revelat
Et Rescrat Chaos. Æterni sic vox tonat oris,
Sic formidandæ grave spiritus Infrenit Iræ.*

Now how much stronger and more Po-
etical is,

*Protinus e vultu Domini conterita Tellus
Intremuit,*

Than that of *Virgil*,
Quo maxima motu
Terra tremuit.

And

And how much weaker is,

Ille flagranti

*Aut Atho aut Rhodopen aut alta Ceraunia telo
Dejicit.*

*Earth feels the motions of her angry God,
Her Entrails tremble, and her Mountains
nod.*

How much weaker is this, I say, than

Montesq; cava compage soluti

Nutarunt, penitusq; imis fremuere cavernis.

Where *Buchanan* shews the Mountains not only disjoynted with the terrible fright, and shaken from their very foundations ; but every one of them roaring with Infernal Thunder, like *Mongivell* or *Vesuvius*. Besides that, in this passage of the Psalmist every thing is great and every thing is sustain'd, whereas in that of the first *Georgick* even the great *Virgil* forgets himself.

Quo maxima motu

Terra tremit, fugere fere.

Earth

Earth feels the motions of her angry God,
 Her Entrails tremble, and her Mountains
 nod,
 And flying Beasts in Forests seek abode.

How poorly does the last Verse of the Triplet answer to the greatness of the other two ?

But now if any one pretends here, that *Virgil* is describing only a common Storm, whereas *David* is describing the extraordinary indignation of God ; to him I answer, that *Virgil*, to heighten that common Storm, shews it to be the effect of Divine wrath, and Divine wrath must at all times be Infinite. But to show the Invalidity of such an objection, I desire any one to produce any thing from the *Grecian* and *Roman* Poets, upon the same subject, that is any ways comparable to this passage of the Psalmist. For, as our Religion gives us more exalted notions of the power of an Infinite Being, than the Heathen Religion did to the *Grecian* and *Roman* Poets ; it consequently produces a stronger spirit in Poetry, when it is manag'd by those who have Souls that are capable of expressing it.

I could produce a hundred passages more out of Sacred Writ, which are infinitely superiour to any thing that can be brought upon the same subject from the *Grecian* and *Roman* Poets.

And the only reason why I refuse to do it, is because it may be pretended, that the Writers in Sacred Writ had the peculiar advantage of Divine Inspiration, and that no consequence can be drawn from them in the behalf of the Moderns, who pretend not to the same advantage. And therefore I shall produce some instances of the preheminance of the Christian over the Pagan Poets; whose Authors cannot be pretended to have been Divinely assisted, in a more peculiar manner, than any of the Moderns may be. The first instance that I shall bring, shall be from the Hymn of *St Ambrose*, a Father of the Church, who lived in the third Century; a Hymn more exalted than either *Orphens* or *Hommer* or *Callimachus* ever produced. I have given the former part of it a dress of my own; thro the which, tho perhaps it may appear disguis'd to the Reader, yet even thro that disguise, he may discern a Greatness, and a Beauty

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Beauty, that are not every where to be found.

Te Deum, &c. We praise thee O God.

I.

A Long adieu to mortal lays,
 Our voice t' immortal heights we raise,
 And sing the great Creator's praise.
 Thy praise, O God, thy boundless praise,
 In more than Human sounds we sing,
 O for an Angels Tow'ring wing!
 O! Rather for thy Spirit to sustain
 Each matchless strain!
 That it may reach eternal heights,
 And in its lofty daring flights,
 The Heav'n of Heav'ns may scale!
 Raise all your voices, strike your strings,
 'Tis God, 'tis God we sing,
 Sound all, and cry with one accord,
 Hail thou supream of things!
 The worlds great Author Hail?
 Hail infinite eternal King!
 Thee God above all heights ador'd,
 We all confess, and all obey.
 Prostrate and low and trembling all,
 Before thy dreadful Majesty we fall,
 Acknowledging thy boundless sway.

2. Such

2.

Such Homage to their Eastern Kings
 The Indian and the Persian brings :
 But Eastern Kings alas to thee
 Vain Fantomes are of Royalty ;
 That with a false delusive pow'r
 Appear and vanish in an hour :
 For thee what Homage shall we find,
 Infinite Independant Mind ?
 What Homage worthy of the God,
 That can unmake us with a nod ?
 Look from thy awful Throne on High,
 And with thy Omnipresent Eye
 Into our Souls recesses pry ;
 There see a Homage worthy thee,
 Worthy eternal Majesty :
 See profound Humility !
 See Souls entirely mortify'd !
 Down senseless vanity and pride !
 Vile as thou art, vain man appear,
 Behold Omnipotence is here.
 When He, who only is, when He
 Appears, what Worms, what Mites are we ?
 Nay, we are not, we only seem,
 We're scarce a Shadow, scarce a Dream.
 A senseless Dream of what is not,
 That passes, and is strait forgot.

O

Thou

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*Thou only art, for what thou art
Thou always wilt be, always wert.
For thou art permanent and fix'd,
Uncreated and unmix'd :*

*The Radiant Heavens and Rowling Earth,
Owe to thee their wondrous Birth ;
Thou of ten thousand Worlds art Lord,
And art by ev'ry World ador'd.
They all confess thy pow'r divine,
For thee they move, for thee they shine,
And ev'ry World's for ever thine.*

3. *All the Earth doth worship thee, the Fa-
ther everlasting.*

*And this great Planet Earth, which rowls
Incessantly around its Poles ;
And till the end of Time must run
Its Gyant Race about the Sun ;
And moving round the Lamp of Day,
O'ertake the Seasons in its way ;
While slanting in its oblique flight,
It shortens or prolongs the night ;
Thee, Motion's fountain, and its source,
It worships in its endless course ;
Thee, while it turns about the Sphere,
Accomplishing the mighty year ;
Its great Creator thee it serves,
And thy eternal Laws observes.*

Clea

Creatures, to whom great Mother Earth,
 Fermented by thy Flame gave birth;
 All that on Lybian Mountains roar,
 Or flounder on the Indian shore;
 All that in Airy Caravans on high,
 Intelligent of seasons, fly
 Thro the vast Desarts of th' Aerial Sky;
 All to their Maker Adoration pay,
 All constantly thy several Laws obey,
 Which their distinguish'd Tribes, and diffe-
 rent Nations sway.
 Their Seasons pre-ordain'd by thee they
 know,
 At thy command they come, at thy command
 they go.

4.

None but, Irregular man, thy Rightful sway,
 Impious, Irregular man dares disobey;
 Yet Impious man too thee adores;
 Thee from Cathaian to Peruvian shores,
 With nameless rites, unnumber'd Tongues,
 he ev'ry hour implores.
 Before thy Feet Earths numerous King-
 doms all,
 Before thy Feet a Thousand Monarchs fall,
 And thee their Everlasting Father call.

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*And thus they cry, thy potent Breath
Our great Forefather call'd from more than
Death.*

*When thou saidst let him be, the sound
Drew him wondring from the ground ;
To Thee Low the Worlds great Rulers bow,
Thou art our God, our mighty Maker Thou,
Thou formst us at the first, and thou su-
stainst us now.*

5. *To thee all Angels cry aloud.*

*Now let us Earth and Earthly things
disdain,*

*Now let us sing a loftier strain;
Now let our Souls to Heav'n repair,
Direct their most aspiring flight
To fields of uncreated light,
And dare to draw Empyreal Air.*

'Tis done, oh place divinely bright !

Oh Sons of God, divinely fair !

Oh Sight ! unutterable Sight !

Oh unconceivable Delight !

Oh Joy, which only Gods can bear !

*Hark ! How their blissful Notes they
raise,*

And sing the Eternal Makers Praise !

How in extatick Song they cry,

*Lo we the glorious Sons of Light
So great, so beautiful, so bright !
Lo we, the brightest of created things,
Who are all Flame, all Force, all Spirit,
and all Eye ;*

*Are yet but vile and nothing in thy sight.
Before thy Feet, O Mighty King of
Kings !*

*O Maker of the boundless all !
Thus lowly Reverent we fall.
Thou knowst how many of us fell,
To lowest Shame, and lowest Hell.
But thou art Holy, thou O Lord,
Art only fit to be implor'd,
Of Sacred Sabbath God ador'd !
And thus they pass Eternity.
To thee all Angels in the Sky,
And all Archangels loudly cry ;
The mighty Cherubim,
Answer the flaming Seraphim.
Holy continually they cry !
O Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,
Of Sacred Sabbath God ador'd !*

*From them Dominions catch the blissful
/ So*

*And : ones the glorious Fugue prolong,
Holy continually they cry !*

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*Th' Harmonious Thunder rowls adown the
Skies,*

*And to the Golden Orbs it flies.
The vast Intelligences all on fire,
With flaming Zeal compleat th' Immor-
tal Quire,*

*To sing thee, Great Creator, all conspire,
All Ranks divinely touch the living Lyre.*

*O Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,
Of Sacred Sabbath God ador'd !*

Holy th' Empyrean Spirits cry.

Holy the Regents of the Orbs reply !

*To the great strain they tune their
Sphears,*

And ravish ev'n Immortal Ears.

And all th' Harmonious worlds on high

Accompany the Song Divine,

And in th' eternal Chorus joyn.

6.

Thus, thee, they always worship all,

Thee, God of Sacred Sabbath call,

For thou hast been of Holy-rest,

The Angels speak.

From vast Eternity posselt,

When all in you created mass,

Does but appear, and move and pass.

All moves, all fluctuates without end,
 But Spirits that on thine depend.
 Yon glorious Worlds that floating lye
 In the profound Abyss of Sky,
 In Matters stormy Gulphs are tost,
 Till in a flaming wrack they're lost.
 We that so far with Angels ken, can trace
 Thy Godlike works along the boundless space,
 See nought from endless Agitation free,
 But Thee, the great, th' eternal mover, Thee.
 Ev'n we are mov'd, ev'n we are tost,
 In Blissful Rapture almost lost,
 Ev'n we sometimes almost complain
 Of Transports that are near to pain,
 Which without Thee we never could sustain.
 Thou movest us all, yet ever blest,
 Alone enjoyst perpetual rest.
 Thy great all-seeing eyes ne're sleep,
 And yet for everlasting Days,
 They Sabbath, sacred Sabbath keep,
 The wondrous subject of our praise.
 But who, tho mounted on an Angels wing,
 Can ever hope to raise his flight
 To such a Towing, such a Godlike Height,
 As Thee with equal Song to sing.
 Thee, God over all Worlds supream;
 Who must not flag beneath th' Almighty
 Theme?

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Where-è're at utmost stretch we cast our eyes,
Thro the vast, frightful spaces of the Skies,
Ev'n there we find thy glory, there we gaze
On thy bright Majesty's unbounded Blaze,
Ten thousand Suns, prodigious Globes of
Light,

At once in Broad Dimensions strike our sight.
Millions behind, in the Remoter Skyes,
Appear but Spangles to our wearied Eyes ;
And when our wearied Eyes want further
strength,

To pierce the voids immeasurable length,
Our vigorous Towing Thoughts still further
fly,

And still remoter flaming Worlds descry,
But ev'n an Angels comprehensive thought
Cannot extend so far as thou hast wrought.
Our vast Conceptions are, by swelling, brought,
Swallow'd and lost in Infinite, to nought.

The next Instance is from *Milton*,
who in the seventh Book of the *Para-
dise lost*, has handled the subject of the
Creation better than either *Ovid* or *Vir-
gil* himself has done. Tho he is cer-
tainly above *Ovid* by the force of his
own genius, as much as by the advan-
tage of his Religion ; but 'tis by the lat-
ter only that he excels *Virgil*, than
whom

whom I do not believe that any man can have a greater Genius. When I say that *Milton* excels *Virgil*, I mean that he does so sometimes both in his Thought and in his Spirit, purely by the advantage of his Religion. But at the same time I am very far from thinking that he so much as equals him either in the continual harmony of his Versification ; or the constant of Beauty of his expression, or his perpetual exaltation. He writ in a Language that was not capable of so much Beauty, or so much Harmony ; and his Inequality proceeded from his want of Art to manage his subject, and make it constantly great. For it would be an easie matter to prove that none of the Moderns understood the Art of Heroick Poetry, who writ before *Bossu* took pains to unravel the Mystery. But nothing can make more for my subject than to show that *Milton*, who lay under these vast disadvantages, very often excell'd, even the Prince of the *Roman* Poets, both in the greatness of of his Thought and his Spirit.

But first let us see how he surpasses *Ovid*, in his description of *Chaos*, and the Creation of the World from
Chaos.

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Chaos. And in order to that let us see the account that the *Roman* gives of it in the beginning of his *Metamorphosis*.

*Ante mare & terras & quod tegit omnia
cælum*

*Unus erat toto Naturæ vultus in orbe
Quem dixere chaos, rudis Indistaq; moles,
Nec quicquam nisi pondus iners congesta-
que eodem*

*Non bene junctarum Discordia semina rerum.
Nullus adhuc Mundo præbebat Lumina
Titan,*

*Nec novo crescendo reparabat Cornua Phæbe.
Nec circumfuso pendebat in aere Tellus.
Ponderibus librata suis : nec Brachia longo
Margine Terrarum porrexerat Amphitrite
Quaque erat & tellus, illac & pontus & aer.
Sic erit instabilis tellus innabilis unda
Lucis egens aer. Nulli sua forma Manebat.
Obstabatq; aliis aliud, quia corpore in uno.
Frigida pugnabant calidis, Humentia siccis
Mollia cum duris, sine pondere habentia
pondus.*

And thus Mr *Dryden* has translated it in the beginning of the third Miscellany.

Before the Seas, and this Terrestrial Ball,
 And Heav'n's high Canopy, which covers all,
 One was the Face of Nature, if a Face,
 Rather a Rude and Indigested Mass :
 A lifeless Lump, unfashion'd and unfram'd,
 Of jarring Seeds, and justly Chaos nam'd.
 No Sun was lighted up the World to view,
 No Moon did yet her blunted Horns renew,
 Nor yet was Earth suspended in the Sky,
 Nor Pois'd, did on her own Foundations lye;
 Nor Seas about the Shoar their Arms had
 thrown,

But Earth and Air and Water were in one.
 Thus Air was void of Light, and Earth un-
 stable,

And Waters dark Abyss unnavigable.
 No certain form on any was imprest,
 All were confus'd, and each disturb'd the rest
 For hot and cold were in one Body fixt,
 And soft with hard, and light with heavy
 mixt.

Let us examine Milton's description of
 Chaos in the second Book of *Paradise
 Lost*, where he shews Satan and Sin
 and Death, taking a survey of it from
 Hells Gate.

Be-

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Before their eyes in sudden view appear
 The secrets of the hoary deep, a dark
 Illimitable Ocean without bound,
 Without dimension, where length, breadth,
 and height,
 And time and place are lost, where eldest
 Night
 And Chaos, Ancestors of Nature, hold
 Eternal Anarchy, amidst the noise
 Of endless Wars, and by confusion stand.
 For hot, cold, moist and dry, four Cham-
 pions fierce,
 Strive here for Mastery, and to Battel
 bring
 Their Embryon Atoms, they around the
 Flag,
 Of each his faction in their several Clans,
 Light arm'd or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift
 or slow,
 Swarm populous, unnumber'd as the Sands
 Of Barca or Cyrenes Torrid Soil
 Levied to side with warring winds, and
 poise
 Their lighter wings. To whom those most
 adhere.
 He rules a moment, Chaos Umpire sits,
 And by Decision more embroils the prey,
 By which he Reigns.

Now

Now I leave it to any Reader to judge, who has never so little discernment in these affairs, which of these Descriptions is most fine, most figurative and most Poetical. But now let us see how *Ovid* begins his account of the Creation.

*Hanc Deus & melior litem natura diremit
Nam cælo terras, & terris abscidit undas,
Et liquidum spisso secrevit ab aere cælum
Quæ postquam evoluit cæcoq; exemit acervo
Dissociata Locis concordî pace ligavit.
Ignea convexi vis et sine pondere Cæli
Emicuit summaq; locum sibi legit in arce
Proximus est aer illi Levitate locoq;
Densior his Tellus elementaq; grandiatraxit
Et pressa est gravitate sui circum fluns Hu-
mour
Ultima possedit solidumq; coercit orbem.*

And thus Mr Dryden has made it English.

*But God or Nature while they thus contend,
To these Intestine Discords put an end :
Then Earth from Air, and Seas from Earth
were driv'n,
And grosser Air sunk from Ætherial Heav'n.*

Thus

Thus disembroil'd, they take their proper place,
The next of Kin contiguously embrace,
And Foes are sunder'd by a larger space.
The force of Fire ascended first on high,
And took its dwelling in the vaulted Sky.
Then Air succeeds, in lightness next to Fire.
Whose Aroms from unactive Earth retire.
Earth sinks beneath, and draws a numerous
throng
Of pondrous, thick, unweildy Seeds along.
About her Coasts unruly Waters roar,
And rising on a Ridge insult the shoar.

But how poor is this beginning compar'd to the pompous preparative with which *Milton* utters in his account of the same thing, in the seventh of his *Paradise lost*.

Heav'n open'd wide
Her ever *during* Gates, harmonious sound
On Golden Hinges moving, to let forth
The King of Glory in his pow'rful word,
And Spirit coming to create new Worlds.
On Heav'nly ground they stood, and from
the shore
They view'd the vast immeasurable Abyss,
Outrageous as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wild,

Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds
And surging waves, as Mountains to assault
Heav'n's height, and with the Center mix
the Pole.

Silence, ye troubl'd Waves, and thou deep
Peace,

Said then th' Omnifick World, your discord
end,

Nor staid but on the Wings of Cherubim,

Up list'd in paternal Glory rode,

Far into Chaos, and the world unborn.

For Chaos heard his voice : him all his
train,

Follow'd in bright proceßion to behold
Creation and the wonders of his might.

And 'tis plain, that Milton owes this
Greatness and this Elevation to the Ex-
cellence of his Religion. How mean is

Ignea convexi vis & sine pondere cæli.

Emicuit, summaq; locum siti legit in arce.

To Milton's description of the first great
Fial.

Let there be Light, said God, and forthwith
Light

Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
Sprung

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*Sprung from the Deep, and from her Na-
tive East,*

*To journey thro the airy gloom began.
Sphear'd in a Radiant Cloud.*

How low is the formation of Earth and
Sea in Ovid, compar'd to Milton's.

*Principio Terram ne non æqualis ab omni
Parteforet, magni speciem glomeravit in
orbis*

*Tum freta diffudit, rapidisq; tumefecere,
ventis*

*Iussit, et ambitæ circumdare littora terræ.
Iussit & extendi campos, subsidere valles
Fronde tegi sylvas Lapidosos surgere montes.*

Thus when the God, whatever God was he,
Had form'd the whole, and made the parts
agree,

That no unequal portions might be found,
He moulded Earth into a spacious round :
Then with a Breath he gave the Winds to blow,
And bad the congregated Waters flow.

He shades the Woods, the Valleys he re-
strains

With Rocky Mountains; and extends the
Plains.

Let

Let us now see *Milton's* account of this.

*The Earth was form'd but in the womb as
yet
Of Waters, Embryon immature, involv'd,
Appear'd not, over all the face of Earth
Main Ocean flow'd, not idle, but with warm
Prolifick Humour softening all her globe,
Fermented the great Mother to conceive,
Sate with moisture, when God said,
Be gather'd now ye Waters under Heav'n
Into one place, and let dry Land appear,
Immediately the Mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs up
heave
Into the Clouds, their tops ascend the Sky.*

What an Image is here? and taken apparently from our Religion, which teaches us the most exalted notions of God, and the immediate obedience of the Creatures to their Creator. But *Milton* goes on, and at the same time sets before us another wonderful sight.

*So high as Heav'n the Tumid Hills, sloom
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious Bed of Waters.* P But

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But Milton goes on.

*And God said let the Earth
Put forth the verdant Grass, Herb yielding
Seed,
And Fruit-tree yeilding Fruit, after her
kind.*

These three Verses are cold and flat,
and inharmonious, for there can be
no true Harmony in Numbers without
Passion; but let us see whether the
Verses that follow will make amends
for them.

*He scarce had said, when the bare Earth till
then*

*Desart and bare, unsightly, unadorn'd,
Brought fourth the tender Grass, whose
verdure clad*

*Her universal face with pleasant green.
Then Herbs of ev'ry Leaf that sudden flou'r'd,
Opening their various colours, and made gay
Her bosom smelling sweet, and these scarce
blown;*

*Forth flourish'd thick, the clustering Vine,
forth crept,*

*The sprouting Gourd, up stood the Cornie Reed
Embattell'd in her field; and th' humble
Shrub, And*

*And Bush with frizled Hair Implicit, last
Rose as in Dance the stately Trees.*

What an Image is here again, with which none but our own Religion could have possibly supply'd him !

Let us now examine *Virgil's* account of the beginning of the World in the sixth Eclogue, and see if we can meet with any thing that may be compar'd to these thoughts of *Milton*, which at the same time that they are wonderful are simple, and are naturally produc'd by the subject.

*Namq; canebat uti magnum per inane coacta
Semina Terrarumq; animæq; marisq; fuissent
Et liquidi simul ignis, utq; his exordia primis
Omnia, & ipse tener mundi coner everit orbis.
Tum Durare solum & Discludera Nerca
ponto*

*Ceperit, & rerum paulatim sumere formas,
Jamq; novum ut stupeant Terræ luceſcere
solem*

*Altius atq; cadant submotis nubibus Imbres,
Incipiant Sylvæ cum primum surgere, cumq;
Rara per ignotos errant animalia Montes.*

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Which by Mr Dryden is thus translated.

*He sung the secret seeds of Nature's frame,
How Seas, and Earth, and Air, and active
Flame,*

*Fell thro the mighty void, and in their fall
Were blindly gather'd in this goodly Ball.
The tender soil then stiffning by degrees,
Shut from the bounded Earth the bounding
Seas.*

*Then Earth and Ocean various forms dis-
close,*

*And a new Sun to the new World arose.
And Mists condens'd to Clouds obscure the
Sky,*

*And Clouds dissolv'd the thirsty ground
supply.*

*The rising Trees the lofty Mountains grace,
The lofty Mountains feed the savage Race,
But few and Strangers in th' unpeopled place.*

And now any one may see how much
Virgil's God is Inferiour to *Milton's* An-
gel. 'Tis true, I know very well that
it may be urg'd in *Virgil's* behalf that
he does not pretend to set down *Silenns*
his Song, but only the principal heads
of it ; whereas *Milton* makes the Angel
Raphael give an account at large of the
Crea-

Creation. I know this very well I say,
but I am satisfied at the same time, that
Virgil making *Silenus* proceed upon the
Epicurean Hypothesis, if he had given
never so full and artful an account of
the Creation, could never possibly have
equall'd *Milton*; for that Hypothesis
runs directly counter to those lofty
Thoughts, and those noble Images,
which *Milton* has shown in such won-
drous motion. For these Verses,

Tum Durare solum, & Discludere Nerca
ponte
Cæperit, & rerum paulatim sumere formas.

And this :

Rara per ignotos errent animalia montes,

Are directly contradictory of those no-
ble Images, which we find in the fol-
lowing account of *Milton*.

The sixth, and of Creation last, arose,
With ev'ning Harps and Mattin, when God
said,
Let th' Earth bring forth Fruit living in
her kind,

Cat-

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*Cattel and creeping things, and Beast of
the Earth,
Each in their kind.*

Here are four flat unmusical Verses again; but those which follow will more than make amends for them.

*The Earth obey'd, and strait
Op'ning her fertile womb, teem'd at a Birth
Innumerable living Creatures, perfect forms,
Limb'd and full grown : out of the ground
up rose
As from his Laire the Wild Beast, where
he wonns
In Forest wild, in Thicket, Brake or Den.
Among the Trees in pairs they rose, they
walk'd,
The Cattel in the Fields and Meadows
green ;
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks,
Pasturing at once, and in broad Herds up
sprung.
The Grassy clods now calv'd, now half ap-
pear'd.
The Tawny Lyon, pawing to get free
His hinder parts, then springs as broke
from bonds,
And Rampant shakes his brindled mane ;
the Ounce, The*

*The Libbard and the Tyger, as the Moale,
Rising, the crumbling Earth about them
threw*

*In hillocks ; the swift Stag from under
ground*

*Bore up his branching head ; scarce from
his mold*

*Behemoth, biggest born of Earth, up heav'd
It is vastness.*

What a number of admirable Images are here crowding upon one another ? So natural and peculiar to the subject, that they would have been as absurd and extravagant in any other, as they are wonderfully just in this. And yet even in this subject nothing could have supply'd a Poet with them, but so Divine a Religion. So that at the same time that the eye is ravishingly entertain'd, Admiration is rais'd to a height, and the Reason is supremely satisfied. For are not these effects that are worthy of an infinite Cause ? Can any thing be more surprizingly strong than this energetick Image ?

Now half appear'd

*The Tawny Lyon, pawing to get free
His hinder parts, then springs as broke from bonds,
And Rampant shakes his brinded Mane.*

Is not the following one great and wonderful ?

The

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The Ounce,

*The Libbard and the Tyger, as the Moale,
Rising, the Crumbling Earth about them threw
In Hillocks.*

And how admirable is the next.

*The swift Stag from under ground
Bore up his branching head.*

He began to rise even before he was finish'd,
and his Horns were finish'd in rising.

I thought to have proceeded, and to have compar'd the Councils and Fights of *Virgil* and *Milton*; and above all, their Description of Hell and its Torments; in which both those great Poets seem to have exerted all their strength. But I am afraid I have already run into length, and there is matter remaining for an entire volume.

And thus I have endeavour'd to show in the former part of this Book, that the principal reason why the Ancient Poets excell'd the Moderns in the greatness of Poetry, was because they incorporated Poetry with Religion; and in the Second Part, That the Moderns, by joyning the Christian Religion with Poetry will have the advantage of the Ancients; that is, that they will have the assistance of a Religion that is more agreeable to the design of Poetry than the *Grecian* Religion.

The End.



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